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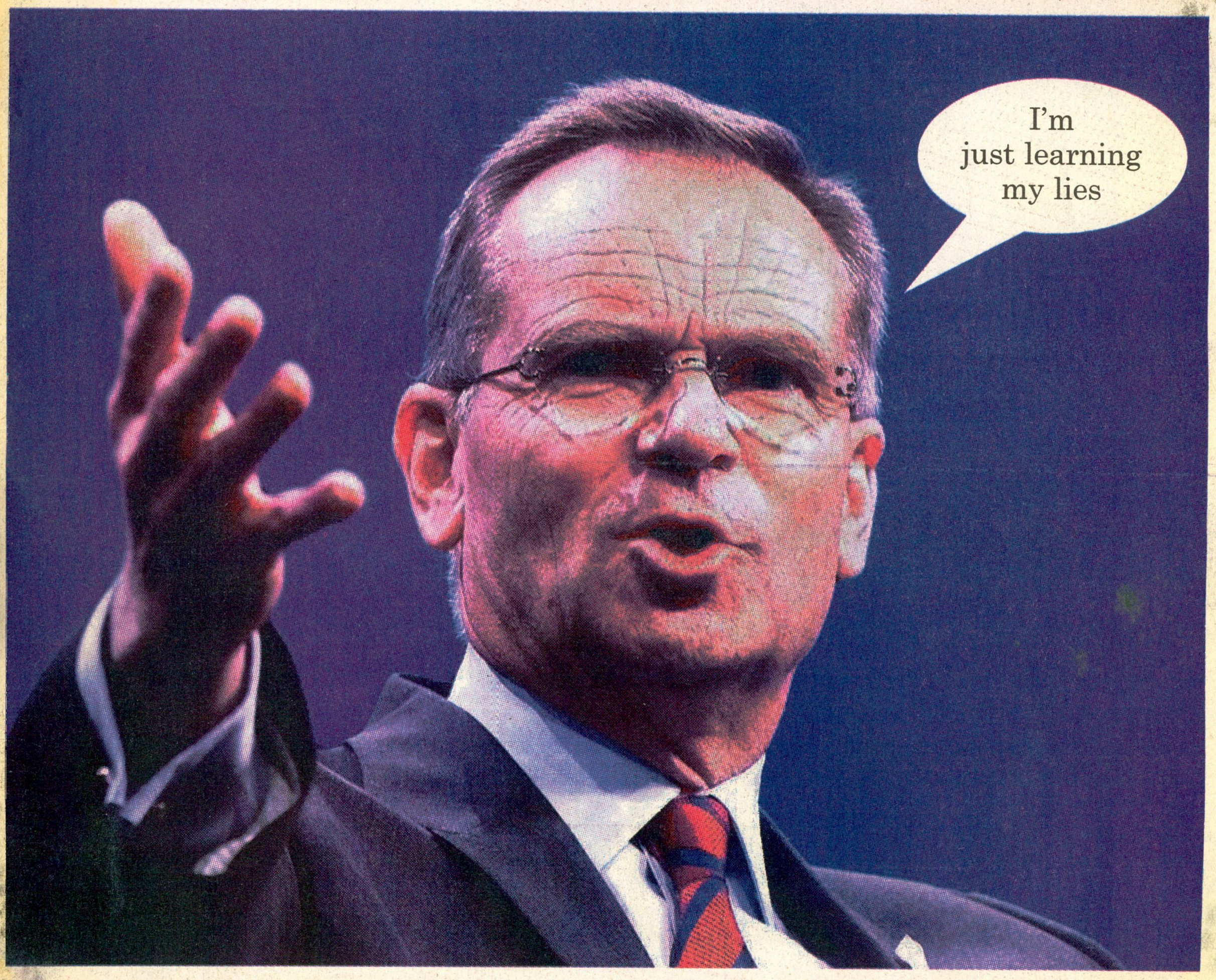

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THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE OU EXPERIENCE

...he national press - have got stuck in. Late last year The Express started a campaign against genetically modified crops which has gathered momentum since Christmas and been followed by the Daily Mail, The Mirror, The Guardian and The Independent. Allegations of cosy relationships between the government and life sciences

FT February 20, 1999

Glad you've caught up with The Express now, Tony.

Blair in policy U-turn over GM foods

BY PATRICK O'FLYNN

The Express February 28, 2000

THE EXPRESS

THE NEWSAPAPER FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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Gnome

NOTHING has appalled me more than the attempts by my former security officer, Mr Trevor Rees-Mogg, to cash in on the tragic death of the Princess of Wales.

Mr Rees-Mogg has been shown nothing but kindness from the Gnome family following the accident in which my son and his new wife Diana were killed. I went out of my way to describe him as "an incompetent oaf who was to blame for everything".

But Mr Rees-Mogg has seen fit to repay my generosity by writing a book full of truths about my family.

How dare he? Mr Rees-Mogg blatantly reveals all of my lies over the last two years without once demonstrating the slightest concern for the distress it would cause me.

He even claims that Princess Diana died as a result of drunken driving when, as is well-known, she was murdered by the Duke of Edinburgh, alias The Jackal, who shot her from the grassy knoll in Dallas with a laser stun gun supplied to him by aliens who were working for MI6 and Mossad.

Mohamed Al Gnome,
Fugger House, Fuggingham,
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"Oh no — it's the Third Way!"

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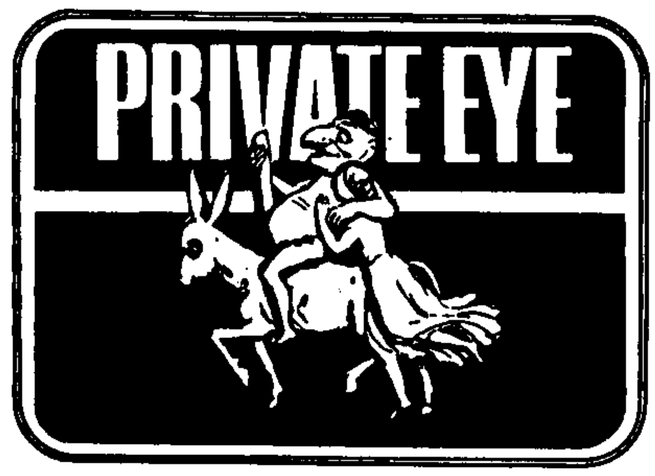
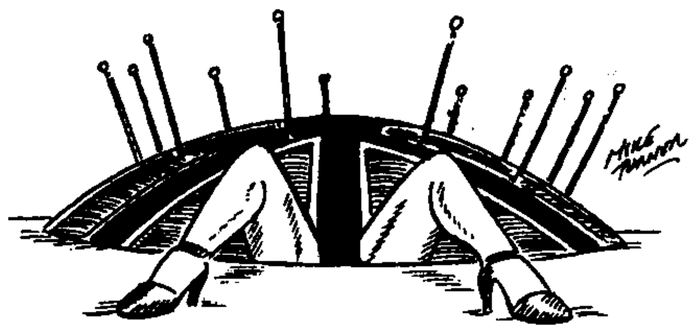


101 Uses For A Dome



Geri Halliwell Museum of Mediocrity

"WE DO not seek injunctions lightly," Tony Blair declares. Not so. As befits a government dominated by barristers (Tony and Cherie, Jack Straw, milords Falconer and Irvine, etc), "new" Labour's first instinct is to reach for a gagging order.

When David Shayler revealed in the *Mail on Sunday* that MI5 had kept tabs on Peter Mandelson, Downing Street immediately took out a draconian injunction which the hapless treasury solicitor has been trying – without much success – to enforce ever since.

When the *Sunday Telegraph* revealed the conclusions of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, Jack Straw made a late-night application to the high court to have the offending scoop removed from later editions – even though the official report was due to be published two days later anyway, and there was no conceivable "national security" interest in suppressing it.

Now, once again, a high court judge has had his Saturday-night slumbers disturbed by Downing Street. "We will do whatever it takes to protect the legitimate privacy of our family life," Blair explained on Sunday, "and to protect our children from unwarranted intrusion in their lives."

Fair enough – except that the *MoS* story which prompted the injunction included nothing about the children, apart from a comment by nanny Ros Mark about what charming kids they are. The rest of the two-page spread was filled with harmless anecdotes about Peter Mandelson's preference for pink champagne over herbal tea, Derry Irvine's views on how to decant vintage port, and Gordon Brown's fondness for cheese on toast. It's hard to see how any of this constitutes an intrusion into the lives of the Blair children.

Why the panic, then? One theory floating around Westminster this week was that alarm bells rang when Alastair Campbell noted the dread phrase "Holidays with Geoffrey Robinson" in the headline, but this is clearly absurd.

A more plausible explanation is that the late-night crisis meeting involved too many lawyers and not enough politicians. Cherie Booth QC decided to go for an injunction after talking to Lord Falconer QC and a solicitor chum, Val Davies, and the injunction was granted in Cherie's name rather than that of her husband. The PM, who was away in Sedgefield at the time, may be a former barrister himself but at least he has some political experience as well. Had he been more closely involved from the outset, he might have pointed out that an *ex parte* gagging order would merely give "legs" to the story for the rest of the week.

If Cherie had ignored the *Mail on Sunday*, its anaemic little scoop would probably have died within a couple of days: even the most ingenious tabloids could hardly get much mileage out of the news that our chancellor of the exchequer is partial to Welsh rarebit.

ON 11 February the *International Herald Tribune* reported that the French "defence" firm Thomson-CSF is being investigated by the French judiciary and that the investigation may prove even more explosive (to coin a verb) than the Mitterrand-Kohl Elf Aquitaine slush fund scandal.

Three days later the *Glasgow Herald* reported that Thomson-CSF is a potential buyer of NATS, the British public air traffic control system which works so well the British government is determined to privatise it.

Inquiries about the matter should be made to Sir Michael Graydon, former chief of the air staff, or Roger Freeman, former arms procurement minister. Both men became directors of Thomson-CSF in January last year.

FOR further proof that the government will do anything to raise a few quid to guarantee a tax break for the chattering classes before the next election, one need look no further than the impending £1.5bn part privatisation of BNFL and its ageing Magnox nuclear power stations.

In July 1989 Cecil Parkinson, then secretary of state for energy, removed the Magnox stations from electricity privatisation because of concern over their "marketability", while pressing ahead with the sale of the more modern AGR and PWR reactors.

During the ensuing debate on the nuclear sell-off, the then opposition spokesman for energy rose to his feet. "The Honourable Gentleman would sacrifice anything, including normal commercial prudence, the interests of the taxpayer and the consumer, and the future energy needs of this country, provided that, above all else, he can sell his privatisation to the City," he ranted.

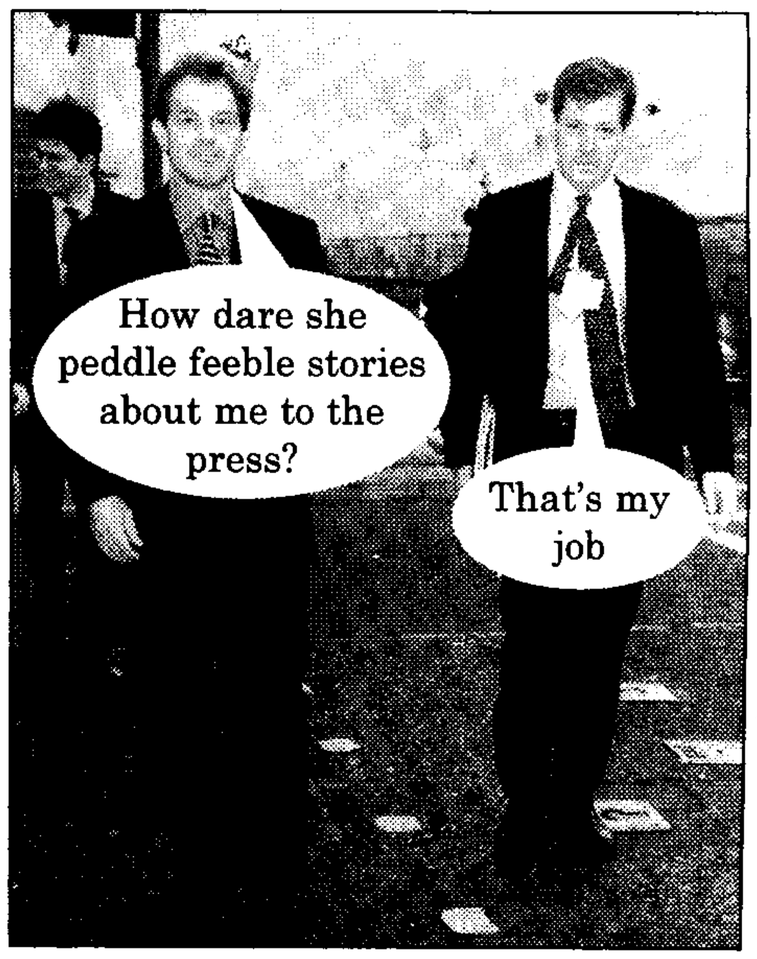
Parkinson called it "a fine display of rhetoric" – and with hindsight he was absolutely right. The speaker was none other than the honourable Member for Sedgefield, Tony Blair MP.

Some years later, in an opposition debate on the privatisation, Margaret Beckett called the decision by the Tory government to privatise part of the nuclear power industry "one of the most reckless gambles the (Tory) government have taken".

Now the government is pushing BNFL and Magnox to cut costs by 25 percent in preparation for speedy privatisation. A recent nuclear installations inspectorate (NII) report on the control and supervision of operations at BNFL noted that BNFL managers were "diverting a substantial amount of their effort from matters which may affect plant safety". In short, they were not devoting enough attention to important duties, such as checking that no one falsified records, because they were too busy working out how much they will make from their share options.

● *Eye TV: Des Lynam's own goal* *10*
● *Diary: "Absolupely" Fabulous Christopher Bland* *24*
● *Books: New Writing Special* *25*
● *Paul Foot, Campaigning Journalist of the Decade* *26, 27*

BLAIR NANNY SHOCK



Street Of Shame

DESPITE his other distractions, *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan still found time this week to help out his old mate Mohamed Fayed.

The rest of Fleet Street thought the most newsworthy aspect of Trevor-Rees Jones's book was his exposure of Fayed's lies about the deaths of Di 'n' Dodi. But the *Mirror* heroically managed to avoid any mention of this angle, concentrating solely on how much money the former bodyguard could make from his book.

In a tut-tutting editorial headed "Cashing In On Di", Moron warned that Rees-Jones "may well regret" his decision to tell all, since "it would look inappropriate for him to profit from the tragedy."

Quite so: cashing in on Diana's death is the *Mirror*'s job. In March 1998, for instance, the *Eye* reproduced a picture of Piers Morgan interviewing Rees-Jones, with a couple of bubbles added. (Moron: "Do you remember anything?" Rees-Jones: "Only what Mr Fayed told me to say.") Though the photo was only about three inches wide by two inches deep, the *Mirror* promptly submitted an invoice for £5,000 — which, oddly enough, we refused to pay.

Moron may also recall an even more shameless attempt to profit from the tragedy: *The People's Princess*, a quickie made-for-TV movie produced within months of the accident by, er, the Mirror Group's own cable station, L!VE TV.

DOWNING STREET reacted furiously to the recent *Guardian* front page lead which claimed that Mo Mowlam was being groomed to replace Frank Dobson as the party's official spokesman in the event of Dobson falling in the mayoral race.

The story, jointly by-lined by Ken Livingstone's biographer John Carvel and the paper's labour editor Seumas Milne, was, said Downing Street, "absolute rubbish [bollocks]". Nevertheless, the same claims had also appeared a week earlier in the *Express* under the by-line of political editor Tony Bevins.

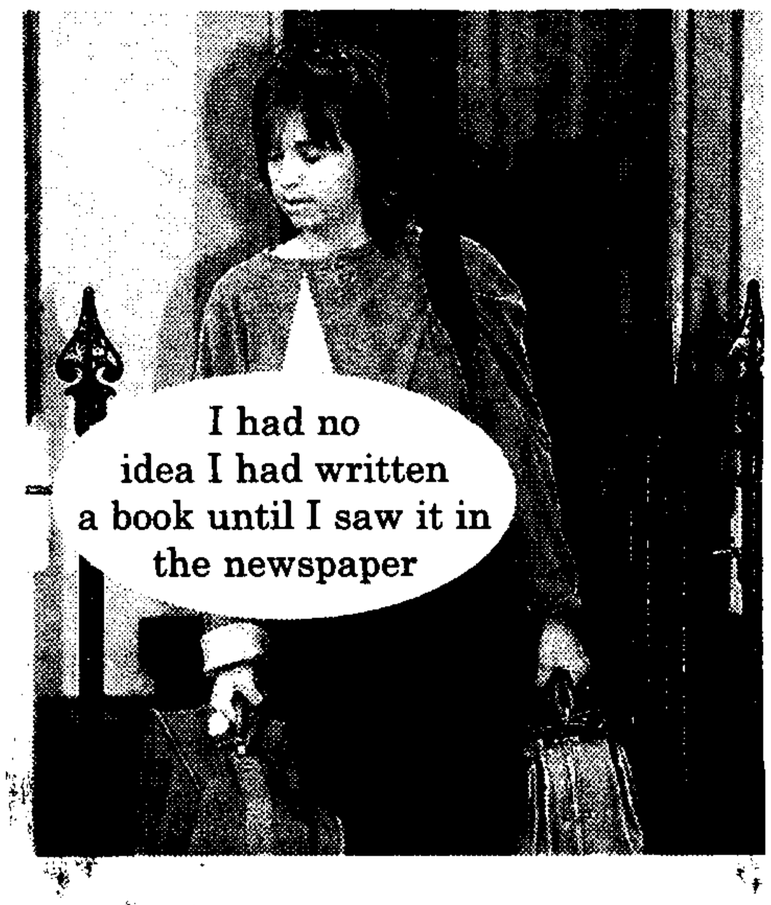
At least one potential culprit is now emerging for the plethora of "absolute rubbish" denials. Step forward Anji Hunter, Tony Blair's confidante and adviser, who works at... 10 Downing Street.

ANOTHER triumph for Pandora, the *Indie*'s ever-perceptive diarist. Writing about Douglas Bader's spot of bother with his legs, Pandora refers to "the Dambuster's famous disability".

Bader's disability is certainly famous enough, especially to those who recall *Reach for The Sky* (in which, incidentally, the role of his girlfriend was played by one Beverley Brooks, later better known as milady Bubbles Rothermere).

His part in the Dambusters' operation has, however, so far escaped the notice of war historians.

NANNY'S SHOCK CLAIM



MR Justice Morland must have experienced a sense of déjà vu on the afternoon of Friday 3 March when he gave leave for the *Express* newspaper to appeal against an order for a reporter to disclose the source of confidential correspondence between Sir Elton John's lawyers which had fallen into her hands.

That very morning he had granted Neil Hamilton a stay on paying £500,000 towards the £2m bill from his failed libel case against Mohamed Fayed. The stay on payment followed a piece in the *Mail On Sunday* on 13 February which alleged that Fayed had bought papers stolen by the *Eye*'s old friend Benjy "the bin-man" Pell from the dustbins of Neil Hamilton's lawyers on the eve of the libel trial (see *Eye* 996).

Sir Elton's solicitors, Eversheds, have obtained an injunction against the *Express*, preventing the publication of a joint legal opinion addressed to Eversheds by Sir Elton's counsel, Jonathan Hirst QC and Neil Calver.

Mr Justice Morland oversaw the drafting of an undertaking by the *Express* reporter to identify the person or persons from whom she had obtained the documents in the event that the appeal court uphold the disclosure order. He described a theoretical situation to stem lengthy legal discussion over the chain of sources:

"Mr X might be a journalist who might have said 'I got it from Mr Y who is closely connected to Brick Court Chambers', or 'I got it from Mr Z who emptied the bins', or 'I do not know what his name was, but he says he is the man who emptied the bins'."

One bin-man who has caused Sir Elton considerable trouble in the past is of course Benjy Pell. In March 1998 a high court injunction put a stop to a series of articles in the *Daily Mirror* based on documents Pell had stolen from outside the offices of Sir Elton's former manager John Reid, which had also enabled him to gain access to confidential computer files containing information about the star's affairs.

The *Express* reporter could face imprisonment if she refuses to reveal her sources. Pell, meanwhile, walked free from a court last December after pleading guilty to stealing rubbish from the bins of another London law firm (see *Eye* 992) with a fine of just £20.

Pell's counsel Eamonn Sherry said in defence of his client at the time: "Mr Pell has clearly got an obsession with waste and rubbish." Has this obsession now come to threaten both the Hamilton libel trial and the livelihood of the *Express* journalist?

THE *Times*'s coverage of the Mozambique disaster was spoiled somewhat by the crass juxtaposition of advertisements on the foreign pages.

On 1 March, under a six-column aerial photo of desperate Mozambicans clinging to a bridge amid a vast flood plain, sat a quarter-page ad for FileMaker software. The otherwise unremarkable ad featured a large spoof business card for... Noah, president of "Noah's Boatbuilding Enterprises" – based in Canaan, speciality "canoes, barges, arks" and, er, databases.

Bizarrely, the next day's photos of flooded river valleys and treetop rescues sat alongside another ark, this time in a WallGuard ad which read: "Rising damp? Condensation? Contact the experts."

Tasteful, no?

LORD SAVILLE has his work cut out as he heads the inquiry into Bloody Sunday.

Last year the *Daily Telegraph*'s then Ireland correspondent Toby Harnden interviewed two anonymous Paras who claimed they had returned fire only after being shot at by the OIRA, the Official IRA (not to be confused with the Provisional IRA, PIRA). However, the Paras added that they didn't think it was safe for them to travel to Ulster and give that sort of evidence to Saville; if forced into the witness box, they would plead amnesia.

Saville took exception to this and ordered Harnden to name the errant soldiers, something he has continually refused to do. When formal hearings begin on 27 March, Saville will have to decide whether to prosecute the disobedient hack — and what to do with certain ITN executives and BBC reporter Peter Taylor, who are also refusing to identify their sources. Unlike Harnden they haven't destroyed their notes and tape recordings, merely withheld the names of their interviewees, but both organisations expect Saville to rule against them before the first session.

The hacks might then take advantage of the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into Northern Irish law (as part of the Good Friday agreement). A successful — and long-running — appeal to Strasbourg would effectively postpone the tribunal's conclusion for years.

THE annual *What The Papers Say* awards are usually dominated by the *Grauniad*, but not this time. Newspaper of the Year: the *Times*. Editor of the Year: Peter Stothard, the *Times*. Interviewer of the Year: Ginny Dougary, the *Times*.

By a curious coincidence the token hack on the judging panel is usually Roy Greenslade of the *Grauniad*; but not this time. Since Greenslade was away, his judging duties were performed by Brian MacArthur – of the *Times*!

Stothard wasn't the only hack who was shocked to hear that the *Times* had won. After all, some of its "achievements" have been less than overwhelming.

Take its assault on Michael Ashcroft, the Tory party treasurer. What started as a "scoop" ended up as an apology. So sure was the *Times* of its story, that when Ashcroft made his personal visit to Rupert Murdoch's home to demand an end to the paper's "investigation" in return for a settlement, the *Thunderer* immediately did as its master bid and shut up.

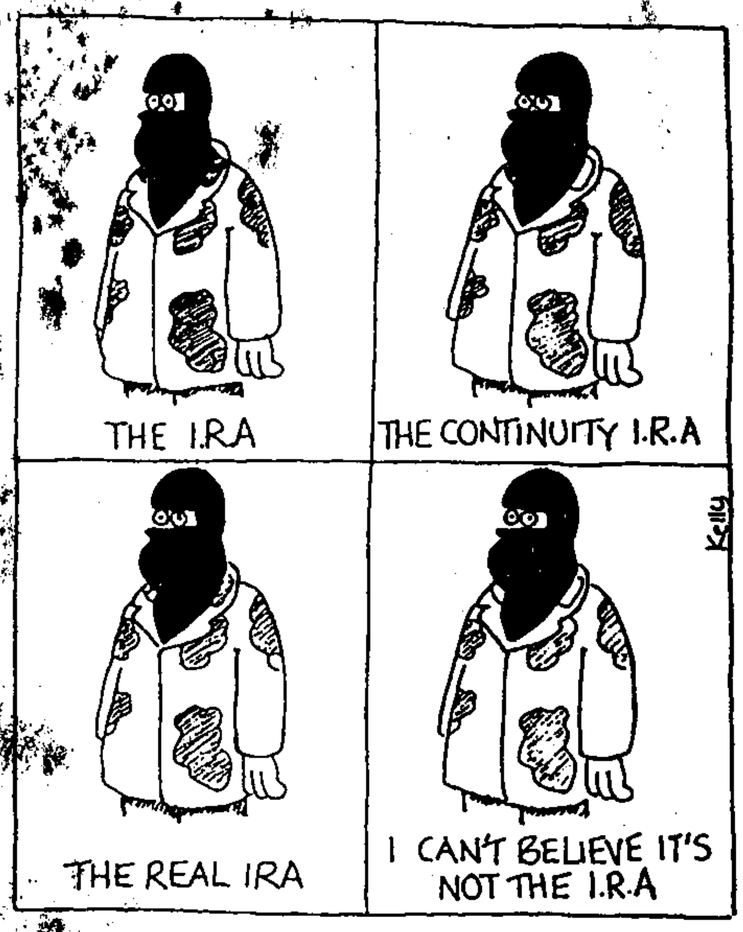
Equally underwhelming was its "revelation" that Melita Norwood was a KGB spy, not least because the story was in fact pinched from a BBC programme called *The Spying Game*. How did the *Times* track Norwood down? Its reporter sat in a van with a BBC crew on the way to film at her home. Where did the paper gets its facts? From an in-depth briefing by David Rose, the BBC reporter who had studied the case for months and who assumed that the *Times* would stick by its agreement with the Beeb not to publish the story until the programme went on air.

Highlight of the awards lunch was William Hague's face when he had to present Ginny Dougary with an award for "outing" Michael Portillo. "You next!" said Ginny to the Tory leader, meaning that she hoped to get an interview with him next. Hague clearly thought she was threatening him with a Portillo-style fate. When he recovered, he did have the grace to laugh.

ATTENTIVE readers of *UK Press Gazette* were puzzled by an interview given by Janet Street-Porter to *UKPG*'s Jean Morgan about the *Sindie*'s new style mag, Reality, which replaces the Real Life section.

"I wanted to really build on the strengths of Real Life," JS-P told Morgan. "Things like Dear Annie and the Style Place... I took all the things I like about it." As the *Sindie*'s millions of readers are aware, the paper has never had a feature called "the Style Place". It does, however, have a regular fashion spot called "Style Police". Morgan's story only makes sense if one reads the quotes aloud in authentic Street-Porter Mockney.

THE NEW ORTHODOXY



ETHICS MEN

THE Slickers scandal at the *Mirror* was no surprise in the City. Many had long suspected that hacks Anil Bhoyrul and James Hipwell held shares in some of the companies they puffed. What else could explain their ludicrous, overboard enthusiasm for software company Dialog? Apart from sheer bad judgement, of course.

Newspaper reports (*Sunday Times*) said Bhoyrul bought shares in Dialog in May last year, and that Hipwell bought in April and sold in July. Certainly their efforts to lift the price — for their own benefit, or for that of their readers — were heroic. They tipped "Dial-A-Dog", as some call it in the City, 26 times last year — on average once a fortnight.

As it failed to catch light they promised "mega-deals in the pipeline" or some "imminent good news" that would transform the company's prospects. When the price flagged they blamed a conspiracy against chief executive Dan Wagner ("Some in the City just don't like the guy. It's as simple as that") or short-term "bear raids". Those who called the shares a bad investment were labelled "pathetic".

In a final irony since the men were fired Dialog shares have, at long last, started rising sharply. They could have spared themselves all that effort.

FURTHER news about alumni of the Tom Rubython School of Fantasy Journalism, the alma mater of the *Mirror*'s "City Slickers" and many similar wideboy hacks who have worked for Rubython on publications such as *Business Age*, the original *Sunday Business* and *Eurobusiness*.

The January issue of *Business Age* included a long feature by former Rubython student Tony Yorke about one Joseph Dlutowski, chief executive of Ocwen UK, "the country's leading non-status lender". The non-status sector – which offers mortgages to people who don't earn enough to get one from a mainstream bank or building society – has had a terrible press in the past couple of years and has been fiercely criticised by the Office of Fair Trading for preying on vulnerable borrowers and then fleecing them. But Yorke's piece in *Business Age* was gushingly positive. For some reason, the magazine neglected to mention that Tony Yorke is actually head of corporate communications for… Ocwen UK.

Yorke admitted to the *Eye* that it was "a bad omission on the part of the magazine". He pinned the blame on Adrian Lithgow, another old Rubython pupil, who succeeded his mentor as editor of *Business Age* last summer.

But Lithgow is unabashed. "I don't quite see your point," he told the *Eye*. We duly repeated it: should a magazine run a glowing feature about a company without telling readers that the hack who wrote it is in fact the firm's PR man? "PR men write lots of articles." Without declaring their interest? "Yeah." Anyway, he added, business mags "have to make money where they can".

As do graduates of the Rubython School. Lithgow has now quit as editor of *Business Age* and is said to be "pursuing PR opportunities". He should go far.

HACKWATCH

O Tempora, O Moron!

IT IS a truly shocking tale of press misconduct. The victim, a clean-cut young chap who has never done anything wrong, suddenly finds that "stories are being written about him which are totally untrue and that journalists are not making fundamental checks before publishing". He is so "appalled" by this Kafkaesque nightmare that he may well submit a formal complaint to the press complaints commission (PCC). As he tells *UK Press Gazette*, "he believes an argument can be made to claim deliberate inaccuracy in press stories designed to smear him".

The poor little diddums in question is none other than Piers Morgan, editor of the *Mirror*.

Piers's disgust at stories that are "unchecked" and "totally untrue" may also cause some amusement at the PCC. The evidence of the last three years, since he became editor, suggests that the *Mirror*'s own accuracy and integrity are not entirely unblemished…

1997

Paul Merton and Caroline Quentin complain to the PCC that the *Mirror* invaded their privacy and obtained photos of the interior of their house by misrepresentation. Moron is forced to apologise and destroy the photos.

A couple from Harrogate complain that a *Mirror* article referring to a car accident 10 years ago, in which their daughter was killed, represented "an unjustified intrusion into their family's grief and privacy". Moron has to write a personal letter of apology.

A man from Aldershot complains that a *Mirror* article implied incorrectly that he was guilty of a "football-related crime". After intervention by the PCC, Moron prints a correction admitting that the man had been wrongly arrested after a football match.

Sue Forsyth, wife of former Scottish secretary Michael Forsyth, complains about the *Mirror*'s allegation that she left the keys to important Whitehall offices in her car, whence they had been stolen. When the PCC takes up the case, Moron confesses that the story was inaccurate and publishes a correction.

1998

A lottery winner's identity is revealed in a *Mirror* story which also contains "serious inaccuracies" about him. When the man complains to the PCC, Moron hastily writes him an abject letter of apology.

A man from Norwich tells the PCC that an article about the death of his brother was misleading and intruded into his family's grief. Yet again Moron has to write a personal letter to the complainant and his family, "apologising for any distress caused".

In June he apologises for causing "distress and embarrassment" to one Brian Storey, whose photo was wrongly used and captioned as being that of Terence Storey, a convicted murderer.

Further apologies and corrections are necessary when the Mirror prints the photo of a 27-year-old girl from Gateshead, wrongly identifying her as a 14-year-old girl of the same name who has allegedly been abducted.

In September the *Mirror* publishes a huge exclusive about Liam Neeson and Natasha Richardson: "I AM GOING TO DIVORCE LIAM SAYS NATASHA." In fact Natasha has said nothing of the kind and is deeply upset — not least because of the distress caused to their children. "We entirely accept that there is absolutely no truth in the allegations," Moron concedes, "and that the allegations should never have been published. We apologise unreservedly…"

1999

The year starts with a mega-correction concerning a BBC producer who died after falling from a window. Contrary to what the *Mirror* reported, the man did not jump; nor was he involved with drugs; nor was he a hippie, or a Buddhist, or a member of a "cult". "We wish to apologise," Moron grovels, "to [his] family and friends for any distress this article may have caused."

When the Kosovo war begins, Dan Milosevic of Essex complains of harassment by hacks from the *Mirror* and other papers, who have "persistently attempted to interview him" merely so they can make fun of his name. The *Mirror* promises the PCC that it will leave him alone in future.

Another Essex man is said by the *Mirror* to have been charged with murdering seven people in an arson attack in Chingford. Alas! "We are happy to clarify," Moron admits shamefacedly, "that [he] has not been charged with any offence in connection with the incident. Nor is he regarded as a suspect. We offer our sincere apologies". After Prince Michael of Kent complains about an article on his financial affairs, Moron has to publish a correction and apology, admitting that none of the prince's personal or business accounts had ever been frozen, and that "there had never been any unauthorised overdraft balances on any of these accounts. We accept that our original allegations were untrue".

In July it's the turn of pop star Sharon Corr, who is said by the *Mirror* to have admitted experimenting with drugs. "We accept unreservedly that Sharon did not in fact make these statements… We apologise sincerely to Sharon for the distress and embarrassment that has been caused." On the very same day, under the headline "Britain's Nastiest Parents", Piers prints a photo of a man identified as Robbie Vigus, who allegedly left his daughter in Britain while he and his wife went on holiday. The man in the picture is actually one Derek Mabbett, a friend of the family, and Moron has to run yet another apology "for the error and any embarrassment caused".

In October, reporting on the killing of John Downie, the *Mirror* wrongly describes Downie's business partner as his wife. Piers has to grovel again: "We would like to apologise to Ms McKeever and to Mr Downie's family for any distress our error may have caused."

The year ends with an apology to Bob Marshall-Andrews MP, after a *Mirror* article implies that he used his position as an MP improperly to obtain planning permission for his house in Pembrokeshire. As Moron admits, "any such implication would be quite false" — not least because Marshall-Andrews got the planning permission long before he even entered parliament.

2000

And still they keep coming…

On 16 February, covering the Lost In Care report, the *Mirror* wrongly claims that Darren Laverty was sexually abused. A day later, out comes the hair-shirt again: "We apologise to him and his family for the distress caused by our saying this."

How can these untruths and inaccuracies be avoided? One solution would be for Piers to spend more time editing his paper and less time whingeing about his own misfortunes. An alternative remedy, of course, would be for the *Mirror* board to find a new editor.

ANOTHER unhappy hack has left the *Observer* (see *Eye* 993), but the termination of Steve Hilton's media column was not voluntary.

His hasty departure, played down by *Absurder* editor Roger Alton, was prompted by his scathing attack on Richard Branson's lottery bid on 13 February, questioning the claim of the People's Lottery to be non-profit making.

A week later the *Observer* was obliged to print a letter from Branson himself, pointing out: "For the *Observer* to allow Steve Hilton to write an article about myself and The People's Lottery without revealing the fact of his recent links with British Airways and previous involvement with GTECH is both hypocritical and damaging. His business brochure in circulation last year lists both as clients. In addition you did not disclose that prior to establishing his business consultancy and whilst at Saatchi and Saatchi Mr Hilton helped draw up Camelot's bid for the National Lottery and was a member of the British Airways account team."

Hilton's lapse was not a one-off. Plugs for clients of his "social marketing" company Good Business in his *Observer* column include glowing praise for the advertising campaign for the cheapo airline Go and a verbal pat on the back to the New Millennium Experience Company.

If Alton denies dropping Hilton's column after receiving letters from Branson's lawyers, why has Hilton sent Branson an unequivocal apology, soon to be made public, admitting that from now on he would be wise to stick to what he knows and leave journalism to those more familiar with the concept of editorial independence?

7.45 The Glory of Love
Five readings for the week of Valentine's Day.
3: *Action*. Love letters and readings from Queen Victoria to Sylvia Plath.
Radio Times

THE Queen Mother, Gawd bless 'er, is fighting her own battle against Tony Blair's publicity machine.

The old dear is more than a little miffed by Downing Street's suggestion that the Rev Blair should read the lesson at her 100th birthday service at St Paul's in July.

She wants the honour to go to either Prince Charles, her favourite grandchild, or Prince William. The Vicar of St Albion's may yet find there is no room at the lectern.

THE Rev Blair has won loud applause for his belated acknowledgement that GM foods and crops undoubtedly have "potential for harm", and that media scare-stories about GM products are merely reflecting "legitimate public concern".

How odd, then, that in the *Sindie* article that announced his conversion he also expressed "delight" that Professor Sir John Krebs of Oxford University had been chosen to chair the international conference in Edinburgh on GM food.

"Sir John was picked by the OECD, on the basis of his reputation and qualifications, before we announced that he will head the new Food Standards Agency," Blair wrote. "It shows that we made the right choice. The conference underlines this government's determination to have as informed and balanced a debate as possible."

But how balanced is Sir John Krebs? As we noted in *Eye* 994, last year he denounced the "shrill, often ill-informed and dogma-driven objections to GM foods" – the same objections which Blair now says reflect legitimate public concern ("I, and the government, understand such anxieties"). And in January, on the very day of his appointment to run the Food Standards Agency, Krebs told Jeremy Paxman on *Newsnight* that GM products "are as safe as their non-GM counter-products".

MORE trouble for PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the gargantuan accountancy firm sensitively chosen by the government to "headhunt" (at public expense) members of the commission that will appoint the great and good to the new House of Lords.

A problem has arisen for PWC over a regulation in the United States which bans accountancy firm executives from holding shares in a company that the firm audits.

No fewer than 52 companies have had formal warnings from the securities and exchange commission (SEC) that the conflicts that obviously arise from such shareholdings should be avoided. One firm, the Compaq Computer Corporation, has taken the warning so seriously it has sacked PWC and hired another auditor.

Full details of the recklessness with which PWC employees treat the possibility of conflict of interest were revealed in an SEC report in December. It disclosed that the firm had managed no fewer than 8,000 violations of the SEC's rules for auditor independence. PWC employees and their families had shares in 2,159 of the 3,170 firms audited by PWC. The accountants' stern response was to sack 10 people and set up an expensive computer system to try to track down any other executives and their families who might be breaking the rules.

Meanwhile, back in Britain the firm's influence in domestic politics extends even further than the future House of Lords. The new register of MPs' interests for 1999 lists six Tory MPs who disclose under the heading sponsorship or financial or material support the following revealing statement:

"Secondment from PricewaterhouseCoopers of a tax specialist to advise members of the opposition frontbench treasury team during consideration of the Finance Bill, 1999". The six MPs are: Francis Maude (Horsham), then shadow chancellor; John Whittingdale (Maldon and East Chelmsford); Nick Gibb (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton); Oliver Heald (North East Herts); David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells) and Oliver Letwin (West Dorset).

THE government's pathetic "strategy" for reducing road deaths did not surprise anyone who has noticed how Labour's transport measures have been diluted since Lord "Gus" MacDonald became transport minister.

Some mistakenly believe the government is running scared of motorists. Not so. The real cause of the U-turns is the roads lobby, whose two most vociferous members are the Royal Automobile Club and the Automobile Association.

The RAC and AA claim to speak for motorists. In reality they have no idea what members – who pay for a breakdown service, not political lobbying – think. But both organisations seem to have wielded tremendous power over the transport department since MacDonald took office.

Plans for a car-parking tax on out-of-town superstores have been scrapped; the fuel-duty escalator has jerked to a halt; the aim of reducing traffic nationally has been abandoned; and targets for cutting deadly PM10 exhaust pollutants have been diluted. Under MacDonald, the department has reverted to largescale road building, which even the Tories accepted would not solve overall congestion.

The RAC and AA's trademark generalisations about what "drivers" want shone out last week when they welcomed the government's pitiful targets – to have just eight children killed or seriously injured every day on the roads in 10 years' time, but more in the interim. They welcomed the targets because "draconian measures" – ones which would prevent many more deaths – would not necessarily be desirable. All along they have urged the government not to impose speed limits whose purpose "drivers" would not understand.

MacDonald and his lackeys obviously assume the RAC and AA represent not just "drivers" but public opinion too. Why is this? Surely it is a coincidence that MacDonald's entry in *Who's Who* gives his club as, er, the "Royal Automobile".

THE best way to become a Labour candidate in the next election is to be a lobbyist, it seems. Here are three examples from the party's list of prospective election candidates:

Ben Coleman, 38, senior partner of lobbyists APCO, hopes to get a better seat than the one he lost at the last election, Broxbourne. He lists among his political interests "health" – presumably a reference to his firm's lobbying for PPP, the private health firm. His lobbying firm has also stuck up for the arms firm Racal, the privatised water company Thames Water and GEC-Marconi, now part of British Aerospace.

Howard Dawber, 30, is an account manager for lobbyists Westminster Strategy and has his eye on Ashton-under-Lyne, the plum Labour seat now held by Robert Sheldon, chairman of the standards committee which investigates conflicts of interest.

Gillian Kirk, 28, works for lobbyists Laura Sandys Associates, and lists among her interests "protecting the vulnerable". Among LSA's clients are First Group, which owned the express train whose crash led to the deaths of so many vulnerable people at Paddington last year, and the Severn Trent group which has just sacked a fifth of its highly vulnerable workforce.

MEANWHILE as Labour's Millbank HQ stockpiled ammo to fire at "Red Ken", plans were drawn up to recruit the handful of leftwing London MPs who had voted for him to launch a separate attack.

Knowing they wouldn't support Livingstone if he broke away from Labour, former Millbank staffer turned Regents Park MP Karen Buck was sent on a secret mission to win over the truculent lefties. Billing the plan as "my own initiative", Buck helpfully suggested that some of the MPs might like to think about "going away and preparing your own statement" which would demand that Livingstone stay loyal to Labour. This statement, assured Buck, would only be used "if he decided to run on his own".

Tragically even these wily old veterans overlooked Millbank's capacity for perfidy. Within hours of Buck's "private initiative", headlines reading "Dobson camp aims to hit Ken with the Left" were all over the papers. Parliamentary Labour party press officer Don "Corleone" Brind and his oppo at Millbank Stephen "Master" Bates told hacks to look at the "real story". Instead of running "Stand down Dobson" pieces they should realise Ken's former allies were turning on him.

But Buck's dastardly plot backfired: the London MPs she had hoped to enlist have now turned distinctly sour. "We acted in good faith," says one, "but they tried to kipper us all up – the bastards. They ain't going to get a single word out of us lot now."

Poached Fillet of Scottish Salmon sat on a bed of Char-Grilled Aborigine & drizzled with Chefs very own Pesto Dressing £7.95

Dalmeny Hotel, Lytham St Annes

100 YEARS AGO

Lord Belper and friend

SO FAREWELL then, Lord Belper. A long and respectful obituary in the *Times* two weeks ago described the late Ronnie Belper merely as an "amateur rider and racehorse owner" best known for his horse Persian Lancer, which won the Cesarewitch in 1966.

Sadly there was no space in this or any other obituary for his other claim to fame. Belper, it can now be revealed, was the mysterious "Lord Y" who featured in a scandalous trial at the Old Bailey in 1973.

The defendant was sometime cabaret singer Janie Jones, who had been arrested for running a call-girl ring. When Inspector Knacker looked through Janie's little black book he found that one of her most regular clients was milord Belper. To satisfy his requirements, prostitutes had to pretend they were 15-year-olds, dressing up in school uniforms and carrying teddy-bears.

Fearful of exposure, Belper decided to claim that Jones had been blackmailing him. He was duly granted anonymity, being referred to in reports of the subsequent trial only as "Lord Y".

Jones was acquitted of sexual blackmail. But the judge — a ghastly old brute called Alan King-Hamilton — was so annoyed by the jury's refusal to believe the testimony of Lord Belper that he sent her down for seven years anyway on a relatively minor prostitution offence, describing Jones as "the most evil woman ever to come before me".

King-Hamilton admitted during the trial that he could not prevent newspapers naming Belper. "I have no jurisdiction over the press," he said, beaming at the Old Bailey hacks on the press benches. He merely *asked* them not to identify the distinguished gent who had — in the jury's view — committed perjury.

The Street of Shame complied — with the exception of *Socialist Worker*. The attorney-general promptly prosecuted the Spartist rag for contempt of court, and somehow managed to convince the lord chief justice – Lord Widgery, an even ghastlier old brute – that, when King-Hamilton said he had no jurisdiction over the press, what he meant was that he did indeed have such jurisdiction.

Belper celebrated his escape from exposure in fine style. After a lengthy dinner aboard the night train from King's Cross to Scotland, the tired and emotional peer gathered up the plates of other diners in the restaurant car — most of who hadn't actually finished eating — and ejected them from the speeding train.

PS: Belper lost the sight of one eye in 1957, after being caught by a stray salvo from the gun of millionaire racehorse trainer Bernard van Cutsem. A wag at the Turf Club described the incident as a case of "shit shot shit."

PRISON NEWS

IT IS a pity home secretary Jack Straw didn't follow the advice he himself gave in opposition when Labour rejected the Tory idea of child jails for 12 to 14 year olds, set up in haste in the moral panic after the murder of James Bulger.

Latest figures released to the Commons show that the three "secure training centres" for 12 to 14 year olds that are now up and running thanks to Straw's conversion to Tory criminal justice policy are indeed, as Labour predicted, "colleges of crime".

The numbers of recorded "incidents" – anything from riot and assault, through to refusal to go to bed – are currently running at 97 a month or three a day. (At the most-recently opened, Hassockfield in Co Durham, which has held only 20 children, they are running at a rate of 136 a month.)

Staff, many unable to cope, are leaving in droves. At Hassockfield and at Rainsbrook in Northamptonshire about a third of the staff have quit in the first few months of operation; at Medway, which has been open 21 months, 64 staff have left in total. Group 4 and Premier Prison Services have incurred financial penalties totalling nearly £900,000 for failing to deliver agreed contract regimes in the three institutions.

"Commonsense and years of experience tells us that putting up to 40 highly-disturbed young children in the same place is a recipe for indiscipline and major control problems," said Harry Fletcher, of the National Association of Probation Officers. Nevertheless the government is planning to open two more of these most expensive forms of incarceration in the country.

VALETE

SO. Farewell then Brandon Gough, the chairman who came to the rescue of Yorkshire Water after the 1995 drought turned the company into a national laughing stock.

Gough has announced his retirement from his back-breaking two-days-a-week post. His legacy? The cosmetic name change to "Kelda Group" and the sacking of 500 workers (*Eye 993*).

Back in Yorkshire Kelda's long-suffering customers, not to mention those who lost their jobs, will be thrilled to learn that one of Gough's last acts was to spend £1,200 of their money on a meal at the London Ritz for himself and his pals from other water companies.

We promise you a comfartable Stay.

Visit our variety of special food fairs!

Tsukuba Dai-ichi Hotel (Japan)

NOOKS and CORNERS

THEY have long memories in Bexhill-on-Sea. The retired colonels and colonial administrators who once populated the Sussex seaside resort never forgave their progressive socialist mayor, Earl de la Warr, for foisting a piece of frightful modern architecture on them.

In 1933 the Bexhill Corporation decided to erect its own public "entertainments hall" by the sea containing a theatre, restaurant, library, conference rooms and other facilities, and the mayor was determined that a good new building should result. A competition was organised by RIBA and won in 1934 by the firm of Mendelsohn & Chermayeff; that is, by Erich Mendelsohn who, horror of horrors, was not only a foreigner but, even worse, a Jew. It was just as good old Sir Reginald Blomfield hinted in his book *Modernismus*: the new white flat-roofed architecture was alien and Bolshevik.

Mendelsohn was, of course, perhaps the most famous and successful modern architect in Weimar Germany until obliged to leave following the advent of Hitler's Nazi government. Eventually he worked in Palestine and then the United States. His finest building in Britain is the De La Warr Pavilion, a sleek, horizontal composition with large windows and long balconies facing the sea which manifests the optimism of that distant time.

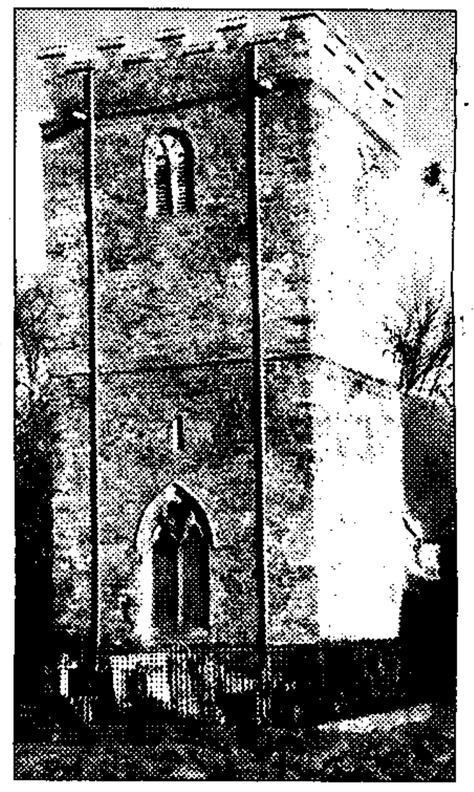
It may not be to all my readers' taste — and the Prince of Wales would surely have tried to stop it had he been around at the time of the controversy it generated — but it is without doubt the finest Modern Movement building in Britain of the 1930s and, as such, a period piece and a monument. It is listed — grade I — and quite right too.

For long neglected and decaying in the salty air, and used by the elderly and retired rather than bronzed Youth, the pavilion has, in recent years, been lovingly cared for and partially restored thanks to the enthusiasm of the Pavilion Trust, founded in 1989. Some £2.5m of public money has already been spent on the building and, three years ago, the architect John McAslan prepared a fine scheme discreetly to provide the additional services and offices which, 60 years on, the building needs for it to function properly as a cultural and social centre. Everybody approved, and all seemed set to go ahead — when the complexion of Rother district council changed from Liberal Democrat to Conservative.

Now the descendants of those crusty colonels can have their revenge on the socialist earl at long last. Rather than restore the building, they want to get rid of it (as they can't demolish it). Devoid of any civic, architectural or common sense, the council has asked Messrs J.D. Wetherspoon, who operate a pub chain, to take on the wretched structure. Never mind that there is a £4m lottery grant on the table, the brutes of Bexhill say they cannot afford the maintenance, nor the running of an arts centre. Not that they will make any money from Wetherspoons: property experts have advised that the pavilion is worth nothing to a commercial operator - besides, the grade I listing will prevent them converting the austere, elegant interior into the usual version of a Victorian gin palace. Indeed, I gather that "the council may even have to pay them some money to take it on". There's dog in the mangerism for you.

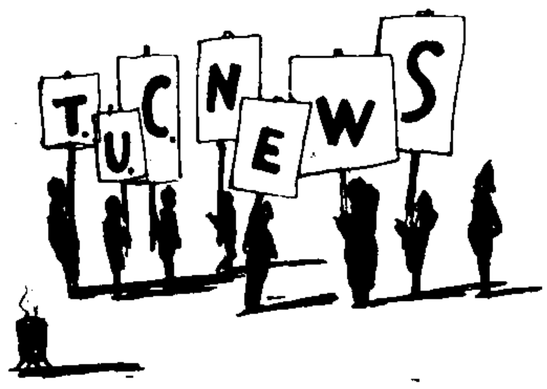
Now there is nothing wrong with pubs, nor with changes of use for historic buildings. Many chapels and banks have been given a new lease of life by, say, Firkin. But the Bexhill Pavilion is not in danger: it could have a wonderful future for the purpose for which it was designed if it were not for the malicious stupidity of Rother district council. Don't they realise that this famous, unusual and beautiful building is not only the only thing worth seeing in Bexhill but the only thing worth going to see? Probably not. Down with the colonels!

MY PICTURE shows not the Bexhill Pavilion but the rather older tower of the church of St Brynoch in Llanfrynach in Wales. Squat, solid and typical, this 13th century tower is a fine local landmark even though the only remarkable and unusual feature about it today is the pair of shafts rising the whole height of the west wall as far as the battlements. A fragment of a grander design? No. They are new metal drainpipes.



This ancient church tower (the rest is of 1856) has recently been restored with assistance from the heritage lottery fund. The restoration architect did not specify additional down pipes — after all, two stone water spouts below the parapet have worked quite well for some seven centuries in getting the rainfall off the roof — but the fund's assessors did, thereby spoiling the building they were paying to restore. What on earth is the point of that? Will the Bexhill Pavilion have to have downpipes fixed to its clean, white walls if Rother district council comes to its senses and takes the Lottery money?

'Piloti'



THE only serious difficulty about the new pro-Frank Dobson organisation Trade Unions for Frank (aka Tuff, *geddit?*) is its shortage of, er, trade unionists.

The most significant founder member of Tuff was Chris Mulcahy, communications union convenor at the vast Royal Mail sorting office at Mount Pleasant, near Kings Cross. Mulcahy backed Dobbo as Labour's mayoral candidate in London because Dobbo backed the union campaign to stop the Royal Mail moving Mount Pleasant to Berkshire, thus losing 1,700 jobs in the capital.

The Tuff newsletter boasted: "Frank understands the situation and that's why he has taken the initiative and intervened with the person who counts: Stephen Byers, the trade secretary. The Royal Mail's management have no answer to Byers, so Frank's move has put the squeeze on them. That's why it's no surprise that the staff and union at Mount Pleasant are singing Frank's praises. Frank has got a reputation... who gets things done."

Proof of that came instantly. Within days of the Labour selection ballot closing, the Royal Mail announced that the Mount Pleasant operation must move to... Berkshire.

TRADE union bosses are busy congratulating themselves for coming up with £16m to bankroll "new" Labour's general election campaign.

Once upon a time Tony had little time for the brothers and sisters... but all that has now changed. Now those whom his aides once described as "little fat men in brown suits" are welcomed at Number 10 for tea and fibs (*Shurely "biscuits"?*).

Not everyone is enthusiastic about the union chiefs' generosity with members' money, however. Many of the self same members are beginning to wonder about the long-term value of their "investment" in the Rev Blair and his unappealing friends. It is a sign of the times that those union bosses who were asked by Millbank to weigh in against Ken Livingstone refused to do so – not because they didn't want to but because some at least had the sense to know that most of their members had voted for the old newt fancier.

MUCH hilarity over at the South London offices of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union, where hopefuls are being groomed by parliamentary panel assessors to go on Labour's parliamentary list. Marks are accorded from 1 to 10 on timeless questions such as "understanding party policy" – an old fashioned trick question to be sure, for only a select few could be guaranteed a respectable score on that one.

While the AEEU is one of the few unions making determined efforts to ensure Labour has at least some horny handed sons of toil on its backbenches after the next election, the assessors are fearful lest any hopeful gets to see a completed form. It reads: "All sections should be marked between 1 and 10, with 10 being off-the-wall excellent and 0 being useless."

"Hello! I'm on the dole..."

TV Eye

The Big Match: Champions League Live (ITV)

THE American writer John Gregory Dunne has just published a book called *Monster* about the eight years he and his wife Joan Didion spent working on the script of a movie called *Up Close And Personal*. Although reaching the screen as a soapy romantic comedy with Robert Redford and Michelle Pfeiffer, the project started as a dark fable about television, based on the career of Jessica Savitch, an ambitious but self-destructive American TV reporter.

It may seem a big leap from there to a review of the ITV football coverage, but it seems ever more possible that English scriptwriters will one day work on a dark fable about television, based around the career of Desmond Lynam. Their declines are different. Ms Savitch was brought down by a combination of sex, drugs and lesbianism, while Lynam — in what would be an important detail in the first part of the script — is one of the very few public figures to survive a sex scandal with relative ease.

In the dark fable of Desmond Lynam, there would be three morals: Money Isn't Everything, Programmes Matter Not Presenters and The Press Has No Friends.

The last would be what Hitchcock called the McGuffin. Everything else follows from Des's assumption that he was immune from newspapers. But this was an understandable mistake. As pointed out by TV Eye at the time of his debut as an ITV presenter, Lynam was unusually lionised by journalists. More literate and witty than the retired jocks who front most sports shows, he won broadsheet approval, while the assumption that his dishy tache turned on the ladies won him massive coverage in the middle-market. A mild and self-regarding quip on his ITV debut was greeted like the discovery of an unknown sequel to *The Importance Of Being Earnest*. His departure was widely presented as the end of the BBC.

Last week the papers turned on their hero. They had counted up his very few appearances for ITV. They had noticed that commercials allowed him little time for his trademark repartee. They had found out that the ratings for *Match Of The Day* had risen sharply under his replacement, Gary Lineker. And, while one of Des's resigning issues had been

"Sorry I'm late, I was just about to leave for work when the postman pushed me against the front door...slowly he began to remove my panties..."

the late start-time of *Match Of The Day*, the show was now slated for a peak-time slot. All of these details had been leaked by a cheerfully vengeful BBC but they proved that no one is immune from the rule that a celebrity in trouble is news.

And Des might have known this. ITV was already full of stars — Anthea Turner, Michael Barrymore, Michael Aspel, Philip Schofield — who moved for big money and then found their popularity with audiences could not survive if the shows were not strong enough. Although there was never any risk of ITV football being cancelled, Lynam made the same mistake of moving out of the environment which most suited him. The Voice Of The Nation status (a Dimbleby of footy) which Lynam held is only available at the BBC because of the weight of history there. Timing ins and outs to ads is a small technical skill but a tricky one to learn after 30 years broadcasting without ads.

Then there's the dosh. Scarcely underpaid by the BBC (and benefiting from an astonishingly tolerant reading of the rules about the use of BBC presenters in commercials), Lynam had more than enough money to survive comfortably even if he never worked again. But television performers are naturally insecure and equate money with love. Price is self-esteem. They never see the flip-side until too late: that failure to give value for money brings humiliation.

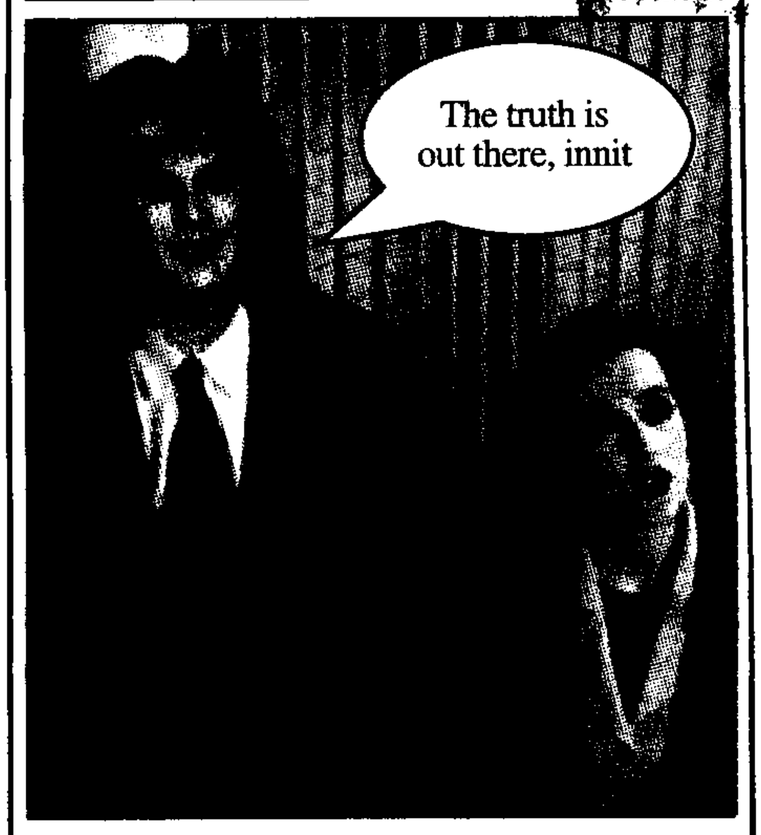
There is also a moral — and a rather happier one — for the BBC, although the corporation may not have the wit to see it. BBC performers — identified in an internal document as Key Talent — were recently sent a pot of glitter though the post. There are rumours that some recipients took it to be a special celebrity narcotic and can now be identified in Groucho's by their gold-encrusted nostrils, but the point was apparently to make the Talent (as they are known) feel noticed and wanted. To the same end, presenters and performers are being invited to a series of Talent Parties organised by the new Talent Tsar, a former music industry employee.

All of this is supposed to stop the Talent from wanting to leave and join ITV like Desmond Lynam. In fact, it might be more productive just to send out 10x8s of Des in brown envelopes with a typed slip saying DES WHO? The truth is that keeping Talent comes down to making shows that people want to do and the public won't watch a bad show with a famous host.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



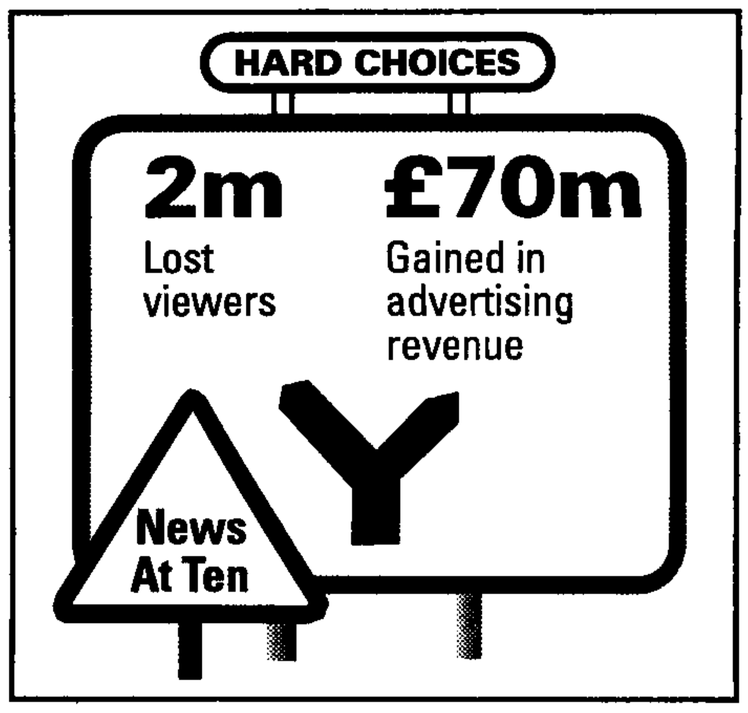
Samantha Fox Mulder

BIRTSPEAK

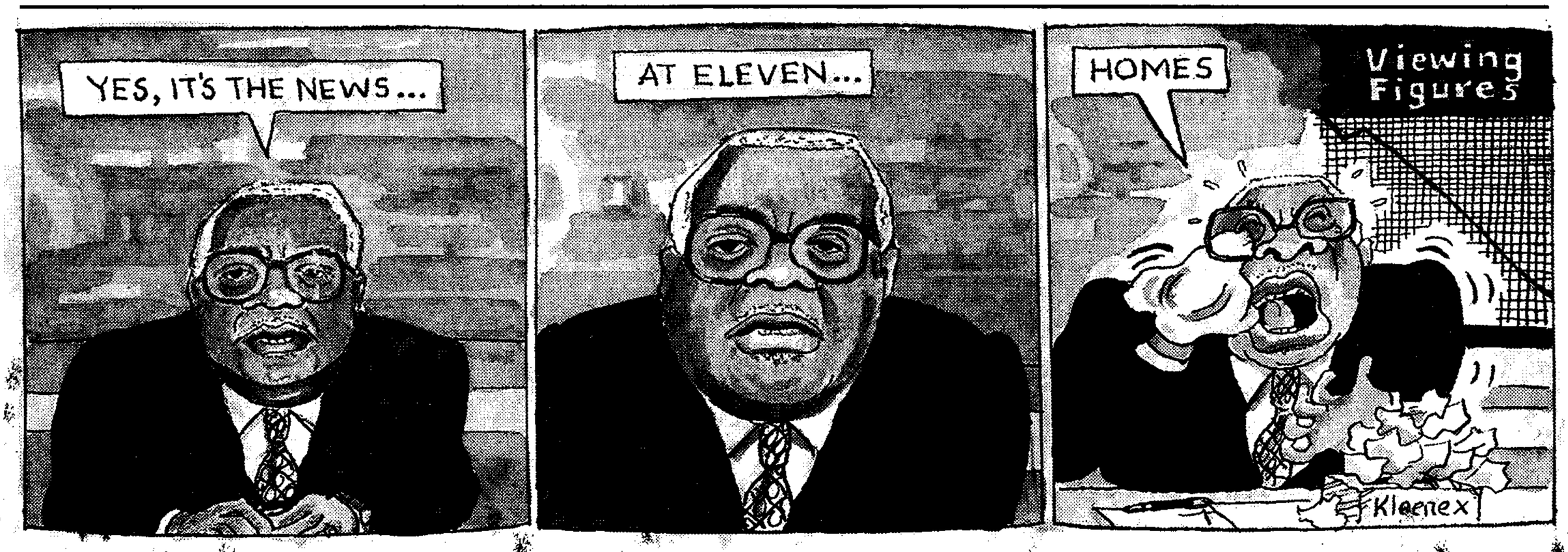
The legacy lives on...

"Please note – users currently registered against an incorrect SLA may receive the CIC before their official AR has been shown the JML process. The information returned in the CIC will correct the users SLA. All AR's will receive information on the JML process."

— Email to BBC Resources staff



● IN our Music & Musicians story in issue 996 about various famous people's lists of favourite 20th century music, we managed due to a typing error to confuse the name of John Birt, the well-known former director-general of the BBC, with John Bird, the well-known satirist. Apologies.



MEDIA NEWS

BBC bosses are cock-a-hoop at the publicity for last week's *Modern Times* documentary on Myra Hindley, based on exclusive correspondence from the Moors Murderer. The *Grauniad* was so excited it devoted no fewer than seven pages to the story.

One small point was omitted, however: these selfsame Hindley letters were originally sold to ITV by Granada two years ago in its bid to win the contract to produce a new current affairs show. How, then, did they end up at the BBC?

When ITV decided to scrap *World in Action*, *The Big Story* and indeed all its other current affairs programming, it invited several companies to pitch for the replacement. Granada proposed a one-hour magazine programme, still to be called *World in Action*, which would be fronted by Jeremy Paxman. The editor was Jeff Anderson – who just happened to be the brother of Steve Anderson, ITV's controller of news and current affairs, and one of the people who would decide which company got the £10m contract.

To no one's great surprise, Granada won – despite not being able to deliver Jeremy Paxman or many of the other hacks it claimed to have on board. The new show was eventually called *Tonight with Trevor McDonald*.

One thing that may have swayed the ITV verdict was Granada's promise of a corking scoop. In a mock running-order attached to the proposal document, it outlined an item called *Myra Hindley In Her Own Words* – "a sensational and exclusive exchange of letters with *World in Action* in which the Moors Murderer says why she should be released from jail". It included sample quotes from the letters, signed and sent by Hindley to Duncan Staff of *World in Action*.

But the story never appeared in *Tonight With Trevor McDonald*, even though it's precisely the sort of gory, high-rating subject beloved by ITV's head honcho David Liddiment. How did Granada mislay the scoop – which it previously claimed to have secured for ITV, and which it had used as a carrot to win one of the largest contracts in factual programmes?

Perhaps the answer can be found in an interview with Steve Anderson in *Broadcast* magazine two weeks ago. Defending *Tonight* against its innumerable critics, he grumbled that it had launched "in the teeth of the greatest hostility I think I have ever known – largely because a lot of people who worked in current affairs were suddenly out of work as a result. We were saying to them, 'you've had your day, it's time to move on'."

And move on they did. Duncan Staff, who had acquired the story while on Granada's payroll, duly took his Hindley correspondence to the BBC's *Modern Times* – whose editor, Alex Holmes, is another refugee from *World in Action*. Trebles all round at White City!

Meanwhile what hard-hitting investigation did *Tonight* come up with last week to compete against the Hindley show? Er, an interview with Jeffrey Archer about his new West End play. As Steve Anderson told *Broadcast*: "We want to make programmes for big audiences now." To judge by his pisspoor ratings, it may be a long wait.

PARTY planner Justin Etzin has enjoyed stunning press coverage throughout his career.

His status as a thrusting young millionaire was established in May 1998 by a feature in *Tatler* magazine about youthful entrepreneurs.

Etzin, now 23, who claims to have been wheeling and dealing in the West End since the age of 12, has made his name organising under-18s parties attended by famous sprogs such as Prince William and Euan Blair (see *Eyes passim*).

Until last year he was a director of a company called Capital VIP Events, which changed its name to Eventtime, before going into liquidation last September. Eventtime owed 17 creditors, including florists, hotels, printers, caterers and dry-cleaners, more than £2,000. Its debts amounting to £156,948 also included 35 lesser creditors.

Etzin, meanwhile, had conveniently resigned as a director of Capital VIP Events in February 1999, leaving him free to devote his time to other companies where he holds directorships, such as Capital VIP Promotions, Capital VIP Parties and Capital VIP Media – a move which apparently went unnoticed by some of Eventtime's major creditors including the Guardian Media Group, *Hello* magazine and, er, *Tatler*.

GREY ARIAS

"Pissi d'Arte"

NOT content with sharing Jeremy Paxman's first name, wannabe *Newsnight* star Jeremy Vine has also adopted most of his mannerisms – the raised eyebrow, the incredulous smirk, the languid drawl.

Paxo himself seems hugely amused by the upstart's desperate mimicry. Inspired by the latest Austin Powers movie, he now refers to Vine as "Mini-Me".

CHURCH NEWS

THERE was a strong sense of déjà-vu when the *Times* reported that Brenda had been pleading with George Carey to stay on as archbishop of Canterbury.

The *Thunderer*'s religious corr Ruth Gledhill's "scoop" claimed that Carey will postpone his retirement in 2001 for two years because Brenda wants him at her side during her 2002 golden jubilee. Attentive *Times* readers may well will have read this three weeks previously when Anthony Howard presented the same unsourced gossip in his column.

Why is Brenda allegedly suddenly so keen on Carey? Howard claimed she wanted him to stay on because she cannot stand Richard Chartres, the bishop of London and a close friend of Prince Charles, who is widely fancied as successor at Canterbury.

Chartres, so Howard claimed, upset the queen by sleeping at Highgrove when the unmentionable Camilla was in residence. He retracted this falsehood a week later.

In fact Brenda doesn't hate Chartres, whom she has appointed to the top position of dean of the chapels royal. Nevertheless the traditionalist Chartres has little chance of being the next archbishop of Canterbury. Assuming Tony Blair wins a second term, he will choose Carey's replacement and there are only two bishops he has any time for.

Richard Harries at Oxford (one of Blair's stooges on the Wakeham commission on lords reform) had stood a chance if Carey had gone early. But it is now a foregone conclusion that young, trendy James Jones, Blair-appointed bish of Liverpool, will land the job. No electoral college; no campaign; no compromises – only the Rev Blair's nod required. If only politics were so simple...

POLICE 5

SIR William Macpherson said last week that police should stop whining about his critical report into their bungled handling of the investigation into Stephen Lawrence's murder and get on with reform. But Knacker has learnt that if it whines loudly enough, home secretary Jack Straw jumps.

Take, for example, the reaction of the police to Macpherson's recommendation that investigating officers' reports into complaints against the police should be disclosed in the spirit of open policing.

Crucially these are the reports that contain the officers' conclusions and recommendations for criminal or disciplinary action (or as is usual in police complaints, inaction). They are currently protected by that old friend of the secret state, public interest immunity (PII). Not only did both senior and junior ranks throw up their arms in despair at the suggestion that – shock horror – their efforts might be subject to independent scrutiny, but they hinted loudly that officers might simply sabotage the process.

It was decided they should put their views on paper before the next meeting of the Macpherson working party. But the next meeting was cancelled by the home office and four months later is all but formally pronounced dead. What's more, the working party never even saw the police written response. Knacker and secrecy, 1; Macpherson and open policing, 0.

THE Metropolitan police no doubt hopes the guilty verdict arrived at by its disciplinary tribunal in the strange case of Sgt Gurpal Virdi, a Sikh police officer, will bring to an end the whole unsavoury story.

Mr Virdi, *Eye* readers will recall, was accused of sending race hate messages to himself and other officers from a computer at Hanwell police station, west London. Sgt Virdi had an impeccable record lasting 16 years in the Met, and was responsible shortly before his arrest for catching and convicting two thugs for a racist attack on an Iraqi student.

There was no forensic evidence to convict Virdi of the charges against him. The envelopes sent internally with the racist mail had fingerprints on them, but not Virdi's. Mr Virdi claims that at the time the computer was printing the offensive material he was not even at the police station. He was giving another officer a lift home. The other officer confirmed this story, and said he went on to Feltham (which was officially confirmed by the records at Feltham). The tribunal did not even call the officer who was given a lift, and announced blithely that he must have got the time wrong.

Mr Virdi was instantly sacked after the verdict.

● OUTSIDE the training school for police recruits in Hendon, north London, stands a statue of Sir Robert Peel. At the back, a large Koi carp pond is guarded by a plastic heron.

Last month Sir Robert was turned into Long John Silver when pranksters transferred the heron to his shoulder. Amusement all round – but not for Commander Richard Cullen, director of training. He has launched a full criminal inquiry headed by a detective inspector from nearby Colindale CID, no less. If only all victims of crime got such attention.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON KNIFE & PACKER

MY GOODNESS, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
HAVE YOU BEEN MUGGED... ARE YOU ON DRUGS... SHALL I CALL AN AMBULANCE?
NO, FOR PITY'S SAKE HELP US UP!
WE JUST CAN'T GET THE HANG OF THIS ROLLERBLADING AT ALL...

SIGNAL FAILURES

A day in the life of Railtrack

A SINGLE page leaked to the *Eye* from Railtrack's log shows that the massive utility is still unable to manage safety. It also makes the government's decision not to create an independent body to set and police safety standards instead of Railtrack look decidedly reckless.

Many worrying incidents followed Railtrack's establishment in 1994, suggesting that the company was not exercising proper control over contractors (who were brought in to do work previously done in-house by British Rail). Some incidents were highlighted in the *Eye*. Railtrack responded with firm and decisive action – it tried to stop information being passed to the media. Action to tackle the problem itself seems not to have occurred – or so a recent page from the Railtrack log suggests.

It reveals that contractors "regenerating" Liverpool Lime Street station put up scaffolding so close to overhead wires carrying power for trains that electricity began "arcing" at the lethal dose of 25,000 volts. In three places walking boards were resting on the chunky insulators designed to keep the 25kV cables well away from anything else. It was the evening rush hour on a Friday at Liverpool's busiest station.

The second incident in the same day's log is equally astonishing. The man in charge of a team of engineering contractors near Ely, Cambridgeshire, did not have the phone number of the closest signal box, named Chippenham Junction. His error was compounded when he rang Racal (which runs the railway telephones) to ask for the signaller's phone number and was given the number for Chippenham station *in Wiltshire*.

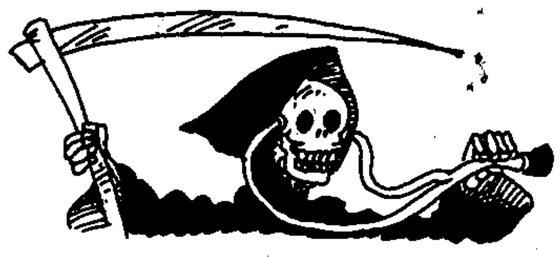
When the person in charge at Chippenham station answered the engineer's phone call, incredibly he gave the engineer the go-ahead to take "possession" of the railway line – even though he couldn't have had the faintest idea where the engineer was. The engineer could therefore have ordered his team to disconnect rails while the Chippenham Junction signaller, entirely unaware of the workers, gave green lights to passenger and freight trains. Fortunately no train was due before the mistake was realised 15 minutes later.

Two hours later there was another incident. A driver got the fright of his life when he drove his Heathrow Express past a warning that engineering work was in progress ahead of him. He need not have worried: it was just another case of Railtrack contractors. They had put the warning in the wrong place.

These incidents beg the question: if Railtrack cannot supervise its own contractors over such elementary matters as keeping clear of 25kV cables, why does the government think Railtrack can effectively police safety over the entire rail system?

'Dr B. Ching'

"Typical! You wait ages and then three don't come!"



DOING THE ROUNDS

THE genito-urinary (clap) clinics at London's Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, conveniently placed to service the Palace of Westminster, have been ordered to turn patients away until the start of the new financial year.

This is very bad news for ordinary residents of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham health authority, which already boasts one of the worst sexual health records in the UK, with high rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Alas, the clinics themselves are so efficient they are "over-performing" and consultants have been told to cut the number of patients they see between January and April by 4,500. Walk-in clinics that normally see 200 patients a day are having to shut up shop after the first 100. And appointment-only clinics have been slashed by 30 percent.

Part of the problem is that funding for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases is all lumped together, and south London gets less of it than north London despite having a higher workload. The choice was either to cut treatment for HIV, which would have been politically very damaging, or cut back on less "high profile" diseases. The consequences could, however, be devastating. Chlamydia is already the major cause of female infertility, and these restrictions will leave even more women undiagnosed and untreated.

Another consequence of the rationing is the attitude of the patients. As St Thomas' consultant David Barlow told me: "I saw a patient the other day who was just so offensive that I had to use all my charm to talk him round. I treated him very politely and very thoroughly, and when I finished I said 'I'm retiring next month and do you know why? It's because of patients like you. I just can't stand it any more'."

LAST July M.D. exposed the fact that four years after the Bristol tragedy, 30 percent of the UK's heart surgery units couldn't or wouldn't submit the results of their operations to the Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons for scrutiny.

The offenders were Plymouth's Derriford hospital, Sheffield's Northern General, Southampton General, North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary, London's Royal hospitals trust, Oxford heart centre, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Belfast's Royal Victoria Infirmary and both the Royal Infirmary and Western Infirmary in Glasgow.

Without audit it's impossible for patients to judge the quality of the service or for doctors to defend themselves against accusations of poor performance. Heart surgeons are currently being suspended across the UK, including two at the Oxford heart centre alone.

IN GWENT fewer than 3 percent of the population speak Welsh. But under the Welsh language act 1993, all public bodies must set up a Welsh language scheme.

At Gwent Healthcare Trust the scheme has to start by the end of April or it will be imposed. As it progresses, translation services will have to be made available for all meetings if required, official public notices and adverts will be bilingual, telephone callers will have to be greeted bilingually and stationery and signs will all be replaced.

The trust estimates this will cost at least £1m – a sum it can ill afford. But as Tony Blair pointed out in his tediously repetitive *Newsnight* performance: "Healthcare is all about hard choices." At least patients can now be told in Welsh why their hip replacements have been cancelled.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

WHAT a forlorn figure is cut these days by Ben Gill, recently reelected president of what farmers fondly describe as the No Effing Use – aka the NFU.

As this bluff North Yorkshire farmer made his tortuous way up the union hierarchy, he can little have guessed that his time in the top job would coincide with the worst crisis British farming has ever known. But from the moment he arrived he seemed to have only one policy, trotted out like clockwork in every speech: that Britain should join the euro.

The reason for this fond belief was that the £3bn-a-year subsidies Britain's farmers get from Brussels are fixed in euros. With the pound at what Mr Gill calls its present "stratospheric level", this means that every year British farmers lose out on hundreds of millions of pounds.

The British government cruelly refuses to operate the system under which countries with strong currencies can claim compensation because, under the arcane rule of Britain's budget rebate, most of this would have to be shelled out by British taxpayers. So Mr Gill imagines that by joining the euro we would at last get our full whack of subsidies from the European Union (EU), and all problems would be solved.

What his poor old brain cannot take on board is that the problem is not that the pound is strong (it has stayed steady against the dollar for more than four years). The problem is that the euro Mr Gill loves is weak, having already lost a sixth of its value in a year. And even if all his dreams came true, and we joined the euro tomorrow, the rules are unequivocal: we would have to join at the current exchange rate. In other words, far from easing the pound's strength against the euro, we would be locked into this disastrous rate forever.

The reason Mr Gill cannot grasp this is that he has always been besotted by the idea that the salvation of British agriculture must lie in "ever closer union" with our European partners, and in reforming the common agricultural policy (CAP) so it can bring ever greater benefits to Britain's farmers. It never seems to enter his mind that it is precisely the dear old CAP which has brought British farming to its present state of collapse, and that there is not the slightest chance of it ever being sensibly reformed.

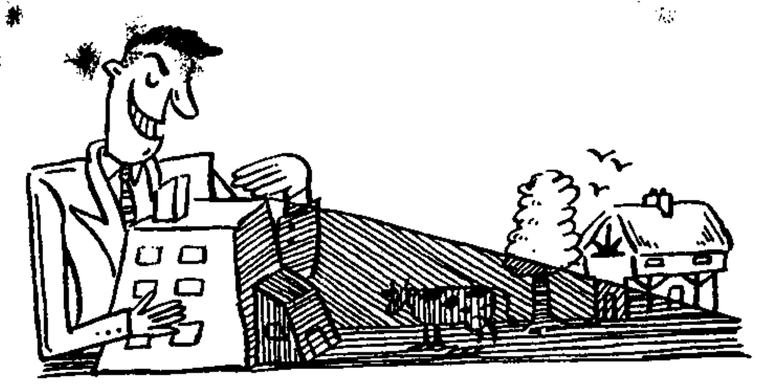
Equally, he is so hypnotised by the thought of those £3bn-a-year subsidies his members get from Brussels,

he does not think it at all odd that, in order to get back those £3bn, British taxpayers must hand over £6bn in the first place; and that if only we were out of the CAP, farmers could get more money in pounds, at half the price to the taxpayers.

But now the wishful thinking that is Gill's substitute for a policy has now zoomed yet further into the stratosphere. His latest wheeze is to plead with the government for a "short-term, emergency package" to save Britain's farmers in their desperate plight. Not only does he want extra money for our vanishing pig, beef and poultry producers... He also wants a "blitz" on the avalanche of red tape farmers must go through to get their subsidies. The answer in effect he has already got, from the responses of minister Nick "my hands are tied" Brown, and the famous "on yer website" speech Mr Blair made to the recent NFU conference. The Government cannot give him either of these things for the simple reason it would not be allowed to by the unshakeable rules laid down in Brussels – the very place Mr Gill has for two years been telling farmers they must look to for all their hopes of salvation.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



THE GOODWAY LIFE

RUSSELL GOODWAY, leader of Cardiff county borough council and one of the highest paid councillors in Britain, "earns" £58,000 a year because a review panel decided, just before Christmas, that councillors should be paid as if they were employees rather than getting traditional meeting attendance allowances.

The timing of the announcement was unfortunate: the huge increase in councillors' pay occurred as Goodway was ordering cuts of £1.88m, leading to the loss of 60 council jobs.

Thinking he and his cabinet had weathered the storm, Goodway then made a successful bid to get on the list of Labour's approved candidates to become an MP. Unfortunately the district auditor has decided to investigate whether the review panel's decision was lawful, after Welsh assembly member Jenny Randerson, a former Cardiff Lib-Dem councillor, pointed out that the panel appeared to have gone beyond its terms of reference in making the award.

Much has been made by Goodway, in distancing himself from this row, of the "independence" of the panel. Its chairman Ewart Parkinson told the local press: "We've been totally independent. We've never discussed this with any elected member."

While the storm rages around Goodway, deputy mayor Gordon Houlston (awarded £38,610 by the panel) is keeping his head down. Cllr Houlston would prefer it if the district auditor did not widen her investigation into Ewart Parkinson, who is a director of the Star Leisure Centre, in Splott, Cardiff. He is also keeping his fingers crossed she will not ask if he ever spoke about the pay increases proposed by the review panel to his fellow Star directors, who happen to include, er, Cllr Gordon Houlston.

BEACON OF HOPELESS

DONCASTER, which hilariously aspires to be one of Saint Tony's "beacon" authorities, is dipping its toe into the waters of voter participation.

In an attempt to increase pitiful turnout in local elections — usually just over 20 percent — postal votes will be sent to all 11,000 electors in the Conisbrough ward at the local elections in May. Each will receive a ballot form, an envelope for same, a witness statement confirming that the person who voted is the person on the form; and a return envelope.

Officials concede that security is less than watertight. There is no system for checking signatures. It would be possible for a determined party or pressure group to gather in the ballot forms, organise a mass signing and gerrymander the result. Single issue groups, religious groups and commercial interests all have the organisation to manipulate a mass turn-out.

Far-fetched? Not in Doncaster where for years the NUM paid the lads hard cash in brown envelopes to turn up and support the Mining Community Group, the corrupt clique which ran the town.

TAKING THE MICK

IN THE Murkeyside borough of "notorious" Knowsley, where political advancement seems to be aided by possession of a criminal record, things have become positively Kafkaesque.

Cllr Eddie Robb, despite the name, is a respectable council member who holds the BEM for services to the community. Yet he now faces disciplinary charges after being falsely accused of "leaking" information to the *Eye* that he was he was on the receiving end of an assault by Mick "the Stick" Kearns, chief enforcer for Knowsley's ageing despot, Jim Keight (*Eye* 995).

Kearns was convicted at Knutsford crown court in 1991 of assaulting Robb — a matter of public record. But the Knowsley Labour party has decided to victimise the victim of the crime on the assumption that he must have been responsible for bringing the matter to our attention. He wasn't.

● MEANWHILE, is Knowsley council leader Jim Keight losing his grip?

When a plan to sell playing fields in Kirkby for house building — despite intense opposition from residents and all 17 of Kirkby's Labour councillors — was recently blocked by John Prescott's department of the environment, transport and the regions (DETR), an outraged Keight threatened legal action against the department. It was pointed out to him that a Labour council taking the Labour government to court would not only look bizarre, but, Knowsley being one of the poorest boroughs in Britain, expensive legal action would not go down well with locals — such as disabled people who have to wait up to two years for a wheelchair.

Also of concern was the £2m asking price for the land, which independent valuers had suggested is worth possibly two or three times that amount. Knowsley MBC has been known to undersell land in the past — the most recent case being when it sold land to Liverpool football club, which then sold part of it on to David Lloyd Leisure UK for a reported £4m profit (*Eye* 958) •

HACKNEY EMPIRE

SEVEN months after the *Eye*'s revelations about the curious planning system operated by Hackney's Stamford Hill neighbourhood committee, the results of an "investigation" by the borough solicitor are still not forthcoming, prompting fears of a cover-up.

In *Eye* 981 we detailed how Hackney's Tory mayor Joe Lobenstein and fellow members of the committee routinely passed planning applications for synagogues and talmudical colleges without declaring their interest in charities associated with the applicants. When the local *Hackney Gazette* recently raised the issue, the council responded — by denouncing "racism". A bit rich coming from a body which was itself threatened with legal action by the Commission for Racial Equality over its own racist employment practices.

Meanwhile attention turns to Southwark crown court, where on 9 March four Hackney councillors — three Lib Dems and a Tory — face charges of conspiracy to defraud, forgery and attempting undue influence in connection with allegedly rigged local elections between 1994 and 1999.

CAFT AS A BRUSH

WITH the end of the financial year looming panic measures have been introduced by Lambeth council's Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (Caft) after dozy managers realised too late that they were not going to achieve the housing benefit (HB) savings target of £2m for the year.

In desperation Caft, £1m short of its target, decided to introduce the Orwellian sounding "Income Maximisation Programme" — management-speak for "Oh fuck, what we are we going to do?"

First to be targeted were private sector HB claimants whose benefit was stopped if they failed to call a (permanently engaged) number. The other "target" group were claimants whose names do not appear on the electoral register. The register used, alas, was out-of-date. The office of the data protection registrar is now to examine whether "damage or distress" has been caused by Caft's heavy-handedness.

All this is good news, however, for HB claimants living in council housing. They are *not* being targeted. Not because council tenants do not commit fraud, but because Lambeth's director of housing John Broomfield is worried about the disastrous consequences on the housing revenue account if benefit claims are stopped. Currently some 56 percent of Lambeth's 40,000 tenants are claiming HB. The council simply needs the dosh.

Matters have not been helped by news that private "service provider" Crapita (*sic*), which is supposed to administer Lambeth's HB, has a backlog of 25,000 unopened letters. Some of which will doubtless be from claimants telling the council they no longer wish to claim HB as they have found work... and therefore are not committing fraud.

Pseuds Corner

Switch On The Waves
Oscillating water column sea clam bristol cylinder salter duck bristol clam duck oscillating cylinder sea column salter water sea duck water cylinder bristol column clam salter oscillating bristol water oscillating duck cylinder salter sea clam column sea cylinder oscillating clam duck salter column water bristol cylinder sea salter clam oscillating bristol water duck column water sea oscillating column duck clam cylinder salter bristol column clam bristol salter cylinder duck oscillating sea water clam column oscillating water salter sea cylinder bristol duck

HAMISH WHYTE
New Writing Nine
(British Council/Vintage anthology)

Confessions of a Pipewriter
When asked "How did you start writing about pipes?" Richard [Carleton Hacker] answered as follows: "One of the most frequently asked questions reporters put to me is 'How did you ever start writing about pipes?' "

Pipesmokers' Welcome Guide 1999

When it was time for her [Angelica Huston] to go, I felt sad and empty of her huge presence. Usually the interview process is a false one. The interviewee is forced to be pleasant and the interviewer solicitous. Only very occasionally something real happens.

CHRISSY ILEY
(Sunday Times Magazine)

Toby Litt. 1968. UK. ISBNs: 0749386274, 0099268396, 0241140692.

Contributors' biographical notes
New Writing Nine

This season is dedicated to all actors and actresses — from the time of Ancient Greece until now — who have, like Hercules, taken the weight of the world upon their shoulders for a brief hour or two: who by acting out of comedies and tragedies within the make-believe of theatre have changed and perhaps given relief to those who must live them in the real world.

MARK RYLANCE
Prospectus for
Shakespeare's Globe 2000 season

Hugo's nougat glacé was too frilly, good two-shoes, dyed-blonde sweet... for me the prune and Armagnac ice cream was the overall drop-dead-gorgeous winner. The Armagnac had attitude and the prunes, you felt, rescued kittens and did good work in their spare time.

MARION McGILVRAY
FT Weekend Magazine

The point is, that this is all gardening. The garden runs through our lives like a river through a field, like air in our lungs. The

garden does not end in space any more than it does in time. The flowers grow as much in our minds as in the soil.'

MONTY DON
Observer Magazine

CONTRIBUTORS: E. Strobes, R. Redway, Adam Quinn, Strobes, Terry Long, A.Non, Mrs M. Coates.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Private Eye

Brushett aside

Sir,

Derek Brushett and the other innocent men caught up in the North Wales children's homes events will turn out to be the next Birmingham 6 and Bridgewater 4.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS THORNTON,
Action Against False Allegations of Abuse.

Thompson & Thompson

Sir,

My twin brother Andrew was on the Thames train from Paddington. As we waited for news at 3.00am on Wednesday 6 October we heard the deputy prime minister on Radio 2 blaming the previous Tory administration for the tragedy.

The same senior politician chose the day of my brother's inquest 22.02.2000 to announce a cave in to vested interests in the railway industry. For whom does he care most? The railways? The dead, injured and bereaved? The travelling public? The emergency services? Or himself? I wouldn't like to guess — but then I haven't got two Jags and a ministerial car.

Yours,
GRAHAM THOMPSON,
Stoke-on-Trent.

Lookalike

Charlotte

Matthew

Sir,

Have other soap fans noticed the resemblance between EastEnders jailbird Matthew, brutally hounded by a malevolent thug, and Guardian columnist Charlotte Raven, formerly the girlfriend of Julie Burchill?

It's a cruel world!
DUFF HASBIAN,
London NW8.

Barking idea

Sir,

Just a passing thought, if the owner of Harrods changed his name to Al Fido, would he be granted a pet's passport?

Yours aye,
WILL WALKER,
Via e-mail.

The funny side

Sir,

Your correspondent, Gavin Mander, Eye 996, needs a sense of humour transplant.

I found the Christopher Reeves/David Frost cartoon in 995 quite amusing (not hilarious, but even you aren't perfect all the time). Disabled people exist. Live with it. They don't need protecting or pitying, just being allowed to be part of society. Just like short people and bald people.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD CAMPBELL-JONES,
(Total T8 paraplegic with severe barachial plexus of the right shoulder. My left arm works.)
Huntingdon, Cambs.

LUVVIES

"I am personally very interested in a historical figure named Queen Boadicea. She was an English woman in the 1st century AD who was single-handedly responsible for conquering the Roman Empire in England and reigning supreme for two years."

MADONNA
entertaindom.com

Submitted by David Roberts.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Barber-ous

Sir,

Your gallantry to Lynn Barber (Hackwatch, Eye 996) is no doubt generally deserved. Yet if there was an award for Tastelessness in the Face of Heroes I think she would be a strong contender.

Interviewing Brian Keenan who spoke of his love for his fellow hostage of four years, John McCarthy, Lynn felt obliged to ask the prurient key question that symbolises so well the predominant interest of her fellow hacks for whom "love" can only mean one thing: did these two exceptionally brave and modest men consider having sex together?

Deborah Ross, whom you rightly tear to shreds in your piece, is simply one of many column-fillers with nothing of value to say and an extraordinary amount of space in which to say it.

With best wishes,
IAN FLINTOFF,
London SW6.

Sindie dull

Sir,

When I penned my deathless prose for the S'Indy (Pseuds' Corner) I was under the impression – formed by years of reading your organ – that no person in control of all their faculties ever had, or ever would, read the Real Life section of the Independent on Sunday. Doesn't Lord Gnome have better things to do on the Sabbath? I think we should be told.

ROWAN PELLING,
Filthy Magazine, Soho.

"I wish you wouldn't wear silly, inappropriate hats"

Losing the Piloti?

Sir,

I feel it is a great shame your organ has been misled by Piloti over the state of affairs at Llandaff Cathedral (Eyes 978 and 996). One might infer from the tenor of Piloti's articles that Dean John Rogers was yet another ecclesiastical philistine, determined to leave his mark on his church at all costs. In fact, the matter is much more complex because it involves a number of vested interests in the storm-in-a-chalice world of Llandaff's internal politics.

Though Piloti's potted history of Llandaff's architectural transformations over the past few centuries — ruin in the 18th, rebuilding in the 19th, bomb damage and restoration in the 20th — is largely correct, it is disingenuous to use these "necessary and considered" changes as ammunition against the proposal to re-pave the entrance to the cathedral. In fact, in view of the huge alterations to the cathedral's fabric, this proposal seems very modest indeed. As to moving the tombs, the biggest bone of contention, it should be noted that in several of the paintings of Llandaff's West Front they are obviously in a different position. It seems likely that the Victorians placed them where they are now, so evidently they are not the immutable sentinels that certain parties claim.

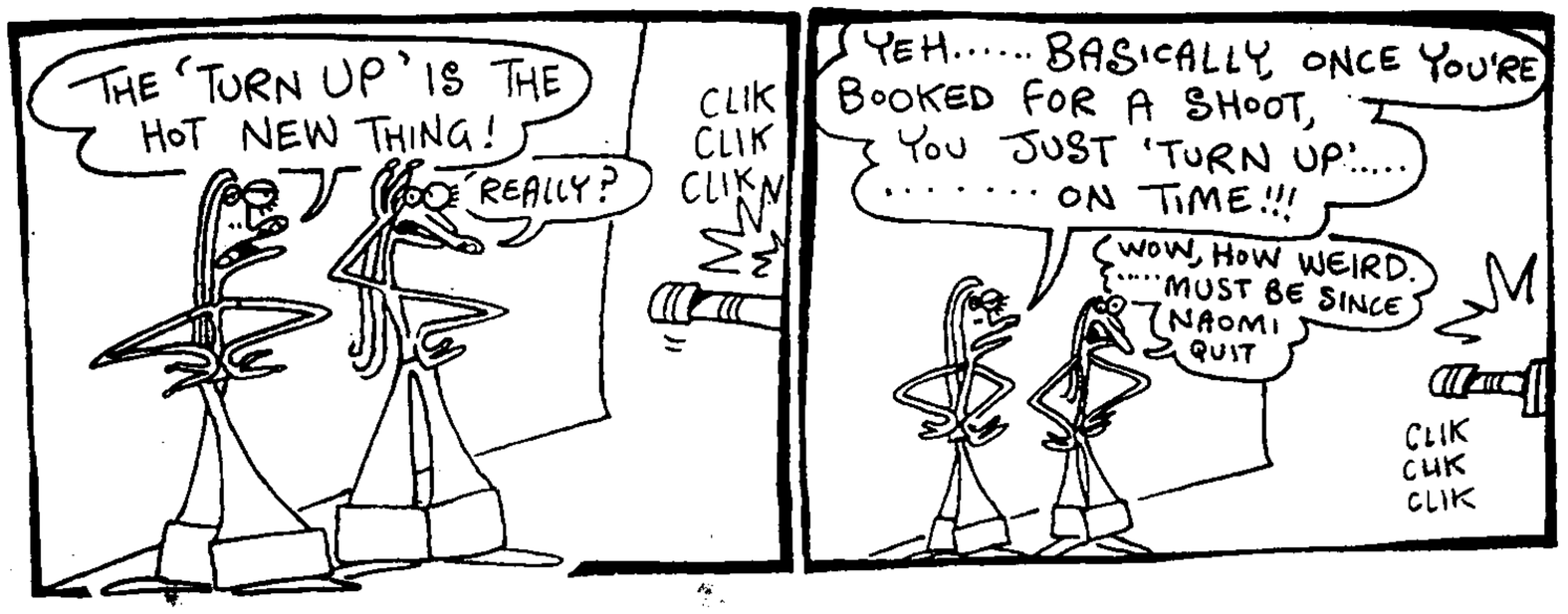
Speaking as a Landavian born and bred, who was baptised and confirmed in the cathedral, sang in the choir and served at the altar, I believe these changes will emphatically not alter the cathedral's character out of all recognition, but simply improve some basic facilities. Hardly the sort of thing to occupy Piloti's attention for one issue, let alone two?

Far from being the autocrat Piloti implies ("The bad that men do lives after them," etc), Dean Rogers was a decent, straightforward man and a very good parish priest.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS LAMBERT,
Dept. of History of Art, Oxford University.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


THE 'TURN UP' IS THE HOT NEW THING!
'REALLY?
CLIK CLIK CLIK
YEH..... BASICALLY, ONCE YOU'RE BOOKED FOR A SHOOT, YOU JUST 'TURN UP'..... ..... ON TIME!!!
WOW, HOW WEIRD..... MUST BE SINCE NAOMI QUIT
CLIK CLIK CLIK

Gormen-aghast

Sir,

Where's the contradiction between my urging the BBC to concentrate on "quality popular drama" and my subsequent rubbishing of Gormenghast (Eye 996)?

By "quality popular drama" I meant well-made programmes that millions of people might actually want to watch, whether I happen to like them or not, ie The Cops, Casualty, The Lakes, Clocking Off etc.

Posh frocks, Gothic sets and big names overacting don't necessarily mean quality.

And a series which loses half its audience in the first two weeks, finishing up with ratings on a par with indoor bowls, can hardly be called popular.

Yours etc,
CHARLIE CATCHPOLE,
The Mirror, London E14.

I-SPY *MSNBC News website*

News
International News
Death row deadline
Texas plans to execute great grandmother tonight, Bush asked to intervene
Conservationists focus on 25 diversity 'hotspots'
The perfect time

Submitted by Mike Hobbs. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Collared

Sir,

I have studied at length the cutting from the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital (Eye 996) but can see no misprint. The cervix is the neck: and if you have a whiplash injury to the neck, a cervical collar may well be what you need.

If the alleged joke is based on the fact that the same word is used for the neck of the womb, it is extremely puerile: it could even be described as a smear campaign.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHANIE JENKINS,

Via e-mail.

"I'm sure a simple child alarm would have done, James"

A load of Boulez

Sir,

Re: Lunchtime O'Boulez. The actual title of the piece by Lunchtime's namesake Pierre referred to is of course "explosante-fixe". Furthermore, if he (Lunchtime) considers "Altenberglieder" — one of the defining scores of the last century — "obscure" then he is pretty well lacking as a music correspondent (and missing a treat). Keep up the good work pointing out hypocrisy and cant but, please, less of the silly swipes at easy targets like Boulez, Berio, Birtwistle, etc.

BERNARD HUGHES,

London SW11.

China syndrome

Sir,

Your item on Berlusconi (Brussels Sprouts, 996) implies that the EU has introduced sanctions against Austria. My understanding is that anti-Haider activity is entirely the work of 14 member states, not of Brussels. For our defence against extremism we are reliant apparently upon such leaders as Blair and Chirac, both of whom have recently feted that well-known liberal, Jiang Zemin. Indeed, so strong was Chirac's fellow feeling for the Chinese champion of freedom that he plans to visit China in October to renew the acquaintance. Who says there's no bloody hope?

Yours,
TOM KILCOURSE,

Jumieges, France.

Sex change operation

Sir,

M.D. in "his" article (Eye 996) reinforced male stereotyping by describing Professor Hilary Thomas as "he". I should like to point out that Professor Thomas, as well as being a leading Oncologist, plays an active role in the Medical Women's Federation, which promotes the rights of women doctors and their patients. She was doing precisely this in speaking out against restrictions placed upon her by her health authority and deserves "her" critical acclaim.

Yours sincerely,
DR AMANDA OWEN,

London Association of Medical Women's Federation.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"If Glenn Hoddle had been any other nationality, he would have had 70 or 80 caps for England."
JOHN BARNES, Radio 5
(Colin O'Toole)

"They're the second best team in the world, and there's no higher praise than that."
KEVIN KEEGAN, Radio 5
(Andrew Bond)

Interviewer: *How will Sir Stanley be remembered?*
Supporter: *As a "living legend".*
BBC Breakfast News
(Paul Fish)

"It would be foolish to believe that automatic promotion is automatic in any way whatsoever."
DAVE BASSETT, BBC Radio Sheffield
(Jonathan Bramall)

"Umpire Fenwick just itches his nose, rather than putting his finger up in the usual fashion."
PAUL ALLOTT, Sky Sports 2
(James Heather)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

WE CAN HAVE AN ELECTION TO DECIDE WHO RUNS THE PLACE.
BUT YOU KNOW WHO RUNS THE PLACE.
NO PROBLEM. I KNOW WHO'LL WIN THE ELECTION.

Letter from Rwanda

from Our Own Correspondent

"I DESERVE a rest, I want to spend more time with my family," our subdued ex-prime minister told the TV cameras the other day, as he tried to gloss over a humiliating fall from grace.

After five years in office Pierre Celestin Rwigema, our least loved politician, has quit. His departure follows an embarrassing series of corruption scandals and a whispering campaign which has even included allegations that he was on the wrong side in the genocide of 1994, when hundreds of thousands of our minority Tutsi population were killed by the Hutu majority.

He never actually held much power. We make a show of reconciliation under our constitution, but as everyone here knows, real authority in Rwanda resides with General Paul Kagame, our bespectacled vice-president and defence supremo, and the Tutsi-based Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) that defeated the genocidal Hutu regime six years ago. The ideal prime minister, therefore, should be a Hutu of proven mediocrity, happy to stay out of the limelight.

Rwigema was certainly undistinguished but he was also a liability. Dirt on him has piled up impressively in recent months. World Bank education funds were diverted to private schools associated with the prime minister, who was also implicated in the bungled dumping of a consignment of toxic pesticide. "The man must go!" thundered our normally craven state media, a clear indication that the general's patience had reached its end.

Kagame must hope the prime minister's demise will mark the return of his usually sure political touch. For it has been an awkward six months for the svengali of central African politics, who led the RPF to victory in 1994 and then helped overthrow Mobutu Sese Seko, the veteran kleptocratic despot of neighbouring Congo three years later.

It was in January that Joseph Kabuye Sebarenzi, the speaker of the national assembly, was encouraged to leave the political scene, resigning apparently at his own volition only to flee the country within days, complaining that his life was in danger.

According to the official version, Sebarenzi had been stoking up resentment against our government among genocide survivors. The popular former speaker was also linked to our batty royalist fringe, which calls for the return of Kigeli V, the exiled king, who was forced out of Rwanda 40 years ago and currently resides in Virginia. Sebarenzi was indeed admired by many who survived the genocide as an independent voice ready to speak out against a self-enriching and ever more intolerant clique at the heart of government.

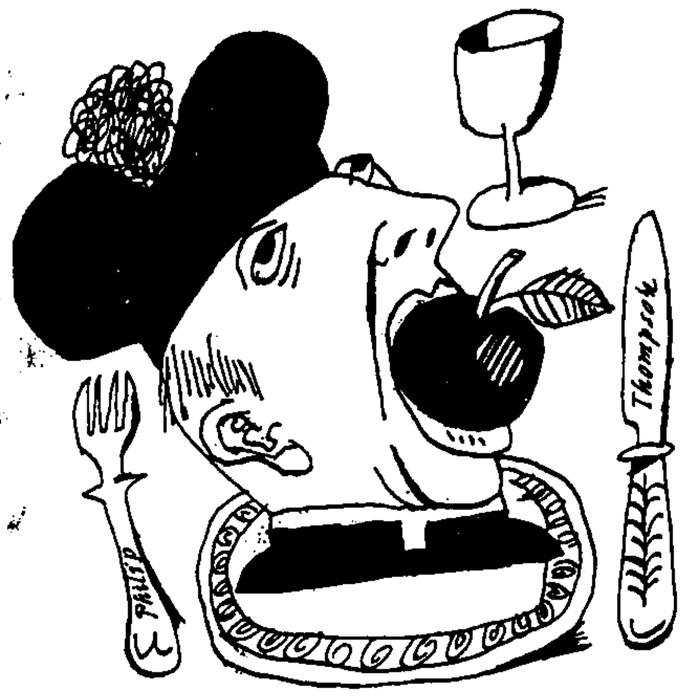
Unwisely he also had a growing following among western embassies increasingly troubled by the growing influence of the sleazier elements of the regime. Among our vice-president's most prized assets has been his hitherto warm relationship with the United States. But Kagame has an obsessive interest in perpetuating a new, ever more debilitating civil war across the border, which Washington now wants ended. Indeed, Bill Clinton has despatched to the region no less a player than Richard Holbrooke, the US ambassador to the United Nations and formerly America's main diplomatic bruiser in the Middle East and Balkans.

Our softly spoken *de facto* leader may hope to lean on old friends to keep Holbrooke and company sweet for a while, even as old charges linking the leadership to the events that started the 1994 genocide are pushed back into circulation. But back in Rwanda we are becoming less tolerant of our self-appointed saviour. With the RPF now pushing for "voluntary" contributions to support the Congo war, our patience is wearing thin. The economy is stubbornly stagnant, living standards are on the slide and corruption continues to rise. The removal of a hapless prime minister may buy a little time, but Rwigema is not the only rotten apple.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "Please, let us keep things in perspective," Norberto Manero told reporters as he left Manila's main prison, after serving twelve years for having murdered and eaten the Italian Catholic priest Tullio Favali. "I have served over half of my original sentence, and been pardoned by President Estrada, so my release is legal. Yes, my brothers, it is true that I ate one priest. But that was a long time ago. I no



longer have a taste for men of the cloth. People need not fear me, for I am older now, and wiser, and I eat only cabbage and lentils.

"During my time in prison, I converted to Islam and became a vegetarian, so it would be strictly against my beliefs to eat anyone at all now. I have asked my parole officer to allow me to move to the north, because there are very few priests there. Not that I have a desire for priest flesh, certainly not. But I shall be far from temptation, and can start a new life. Once in the north, I plan to open a restaurant with my brothers, when they are released. But I am sworn off meat, so you can have full confidence in the wholesomeness of my cooking." (*New Straits Times [Malaysia], 2/2/2000. Spotter: Alexander Nissen)*

— ● —

● **"This is an insane and foolish idea," fumed Bent Schroeder, director of the Danish subsidiary of Moulinex after visiting the Trapholt Museum of Modern Art in Kolding. "Not only is it sadistic, but it is a flagrant abuse of our company name, which risks being associated in the public mind with this vile exhibit."**

But the exhibit in question (which had been conceived and built by the self-styled artist Marco Evaristti) was vigorously defended by the museum's director, Peter Meyer. "Marco's work consists of ten Moulinex blenders, each filled with water, and each containing a goldfish. A sign tells visitors that they can decide whether the fish live or die. This gives freedom of choice to the public conscience on whether or not to push the death button. It's quite existential really. Of course, a truly wicked person can always turn on the mixers and transform the fish into mush, and sometimes they do, but most just look. So far, nine fish have been liquefied. They are difficult to remove. We use a tea strainer."

Animal rights activists in Denmark abducted seven of the original ten fish when the exhibit first opened, but these were soon replaced by the museum. They have also tried to cut off the museum's electricity supply, so far without success. *(AFP, 18/2/2000. Spotter: M. Clark)*

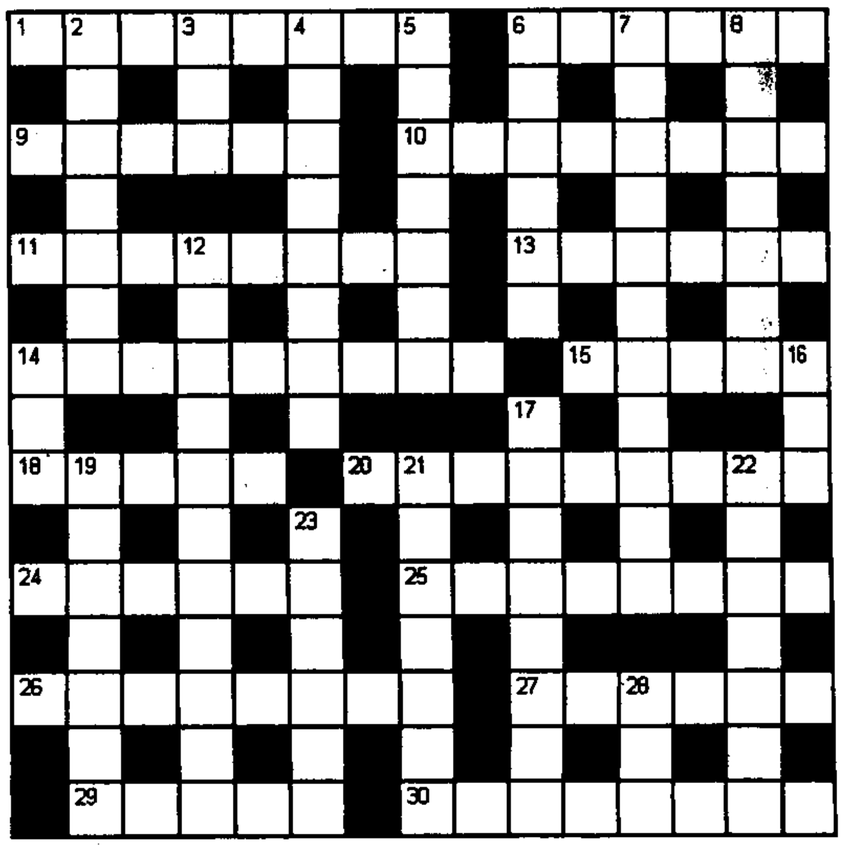
— ● —

● *"Why have I come here today with my mortuary van full of corpses?" yelled Simon Munyiri Muriithi at a crowd of appalled onlookers who had gathered outside the Town Hall in Nakuru (Kenya). "Because the council say I am just a ghost worker, who does not do a real job, and they want to take me off the pay roll. But I tell you this. I am a real worker, and I do a real job in the mortuary. And now that you have seen the kind of work I do, you will surely agree that I fully deserve my pay."*

However, Mayor Herman Nderi (who had been trying to reduce the council's running costs by removing "ghost" workers from the pay roll) condemned Muriithi's behaviour as reckless. "Dumping fourteen decomposing, maggot-infested bodies outside the Town Hall on a hot day is the height of irresponsibility. No one can get near them to move them, because they'd been lying unclaimed in the mortuary for months before Mr Muriithi drove them here. The rotting smell is so bad that it has forced us to evacuate the Town Hall and the Public Health Department Offices. We've lost a day's work, and the Kenya Power and Lighting Company opposite has also had to close down. But I suppose we'll have to keep Mr Muriithi on the payroll, despite this outrage, because he's the only person in town who can move the bodies again. He has no sense of smell, you see." (The Daily Nation [Kenya], 16/2/2000. Spotter: Dr Nick Hall)

EYE CROSSWORD 152

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Hiding a kinky sex activity (8)
6 Brenda's place as china expert? (6)
9/7/26 Said at famous meeting when Blair asked: "How do we ensure Dobson wins?"? (6,11,1,7)
10 Distressing sum of money to get Ivor cavorting with Sue (8)
11 Electorate secures head of government with unpleasant after-effect! (8)
13 Faction of RUC on Mandelson: "Fraudster!" (6)
14 Do row – it seems to be mandatory for Labour MPs! (5,4)
15 One wishes England was as fired up when competing for them! (5)
18 A person penetrating the old monarch is stiff (5)
20 Shut up, Cash! (That's one way to keep the blabber-mouth quiet) (4,5)
24 After publicity is Pat's bespoke tailors (6)
25 Students' poetry? – that's all there is (8)
26 (see 9)
27 Criminal also being a swat? (6)
29 South American? That's a girl! (5)
30 Tabloid's hell – no point getting protection from burning! (8)

DOWN

2 Reason for getting arse on one in proportion (3,4)
3 Brazil freak? (3)
4 Rebellious lover in trouble given time (2,6)
5 The first world revolutionary involved in designing Aga rings (7)
6 Reportedly snaps a royal (6)
7 (see 9)
8 Like to make a come-back in vulgar campaign? (7)
12 Good to talk to the papers? Not these! (6,5)
14+16 Cops disrespectfully going over Blair on leaving dirty place (6)
16 (see 14 dn.)
17 Chippendale Tory party manager? (8)
19 Complex bloke who knocked off both his parents (7)
21 Sharks of great interest (7)
22 Disputed seat, close London area (4,3)
23 Shrewd exclusion of Tory leader from statute reform! (6)
28 This country hospital briefly represents a right corporate doing-over (3)

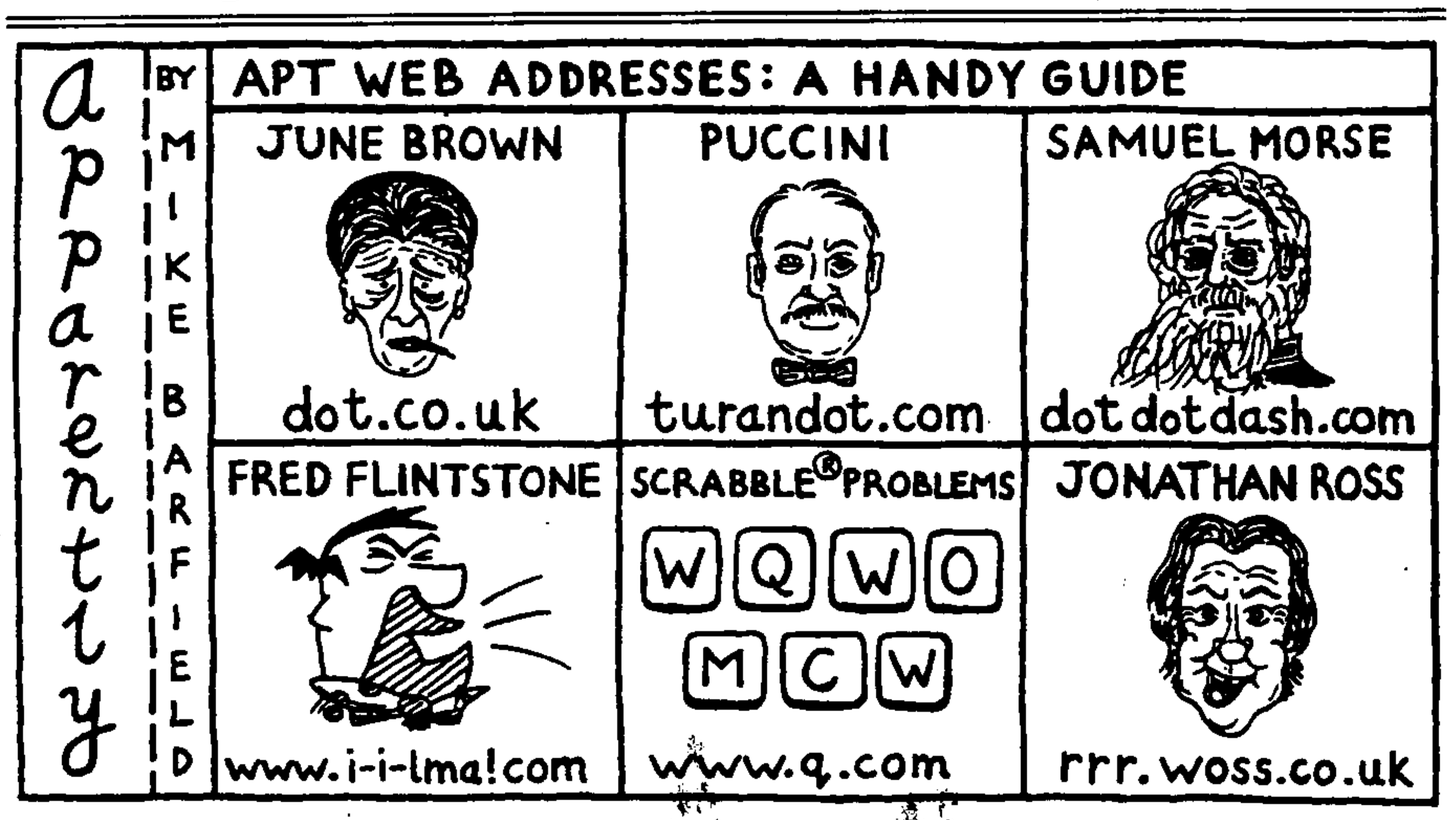
£100 prize to first solution opened on 17.3.00. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 151

Winner: TIM WEISSELBERG

ACROSS: 1 Booby trap 6 Tests 9/12/23 A fair crack of the whip 10 Montezuma 11 Rays 12 (see 9) 14 Tetanus 16 Armpit 18 Scena 20 Handgun 22 Animal Farm 23 (see 9) 26 Telepathy 27 Punch 28 Posed 29 Hypnotist

DOWN: 1 Blairite 2 Ovary 3 Yard 4 Remarks 5 Panacea 6 The Commons 7 Squatting 8 Slated 13 Knee-capped 15 Testicles 17 Snapshot 19 Al-Fatah 20 Hurry up 21 Laptop 24 Hanoi 25 Oppo.



Exclusive To Private Eye

THE STORY THEY TRIED TO GAG BY THE WOMAN THEY ARE CALLING 'NANNY JUDAS'

Chapter One

I SHALL never forget the day I first met Mr and Mrs Blair. They were a very nice couple with very nice children. "You are going to be our nanny," they said. "We hope you will be very happy with us."

Chapter Two

I WAS the Blairs' nanny! How happy I was. Our address was Number Ten, Downing Street, because Mr Blair was Prime Minister of England. And I was his nanny!

Chapter Three

MR BLAIR had a very nice friend called Mr Mandelson who speaks very quietly and has very nice manners. Once he came round and asked me for a bottle of pink champagne. "I'm celebrating a bit of luck," he said. "I've just bought a nice big house."

Chapter Four

ONE DAY a very important man came to the house. He was the Prime Minister of America. He had a funny accent and was very nice to all the ladies.

Chapter Five

EVERYONE I meet here is very nice. Unfortunately, I am not, so I'm off to the Mail on Sunday to sell them my story. "Can you spice it up a bit?" the nice Mr Peter Wright said. "No," I said. "Never mind," he told me. "It's not very interesting but I'll put it in any way." What a nice man.

Chapter Six

A VERY nice cheque arrived.

(To be continued)

MARY POPPINS SPILLS BEANS

by Our Home Affairs Staff **Dick Van Dyke**

IN what has been described as the most outrageous breach of confidentiality in the history of domestic service, a former nanny to the Banks family has sold her story to Walt Disney for an undisclosed seven-figure sum.

Mary Poppins, although claiming to get on well with the family, gives intimate details of their private life.

"Mr Banks is a wet, ineffectual man, only interested in his career, who does not spend enough time with his children," she writes.

SUPERTONYLOVELYCHERIECAMPBELL-ISATROCIOUS

But her scorn is reserved for Mrs Cherie Banks, whom she describes as "an ardent feminist, more committed to women's issues than looking after her children".

Her story is filled with humorous anecdotes about their chimney-sweep friends and indiscreet descriptions of Mr Banks' office, but the Banks family are furious at the disclosures and last night sought a high court injunction to stop Poppins and her ghost writer, P.L. Travers, cashing in on these revelations.

Said Mr Banks, "You can't even go and fly a kite nowadays without it ending up on screen."

David Tomlinson is 81.

DICTATOR 'UNFIT TO REMAIN IN BRITAIN'

by Our Diplomatic Staff **Chile Cooper**

DOCTORS today certified the former British leader Mrs Thatochet is "unfit" to stay any longer in Britain on the grounds that she is "completely senile".

Her conduct, they conclude, has become irrational and embarrassing. Not only did she give General Pinochet a plate under the impression that he was Sir Francis Drake, but she even supported Lord Archer in his campaign to become Lord Mayor.

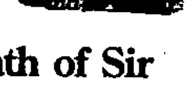
The doctors recommend that the hated despot is shipped immediately to secure accommodation in the Falkland Islands where she can be sure of a hero's welcome from a grateful population (Sid and Doris Penguin).

A spokesman for the dictator, Mr Charles Moore, said: "She has suffered enough. It is now her only wish to be leader of the Tory Party again." *(Surely "retire with dignity"? Ed.)*

PINOCHET SHOCK

SALLY JOCKSTRAP

Private Eye's Wizard Of The Dribble



■ THE tragic death of Sir Bernard Matthews cast a terrible pall over the world of cricket. He exemplified all that was best about the Sport of Kings. What a contrast to today's golfers who are not worthy to kiss Sir Victor Matthews's tennis racket.

☐ I WAS lucky enough to watch Sir Accrington Stanley's last fight at Madison Avenue when it was shown on Sky TV last night. He was a wizard with the darts and we shall not see his like again.

100 Years Ago

From the Daily Telegraph, March 7th, 1927

St Cakes

Tallulah Term begins today. There are 17 boys in the school and no girls, thank goodness. Lord Fotherington de Twitte is Chief Nob. The Hon. Charles Fitztightly is Dropper of the Trousers. Miss Bankhead replaces Dame Elspeth Trout as Moral Tutor to the Sixth Form. Seductions will be run in the Ritz Hotel and attendance will be compulsory for the First Fifteen. Legover will be held on alternate Tuesdays until further notice. Rustications will be announced at the end of term.

"God! How I hate Vivaldi!"

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And, of course, there's been only one topic of conversation in the parish this week – and that's the great party we had in the church hall to celebrate the first 100 years of St Albion's!

What an unforgettable evening it was – and special thanks to all the ladies of the parish, led by Cherie, who worked so hard behind the scenes to make all the refreshments!

Mr Sainsbury's "Holy Guacamole" GM Dip went down particularly well – as did his tomatofish soup!

And what a pleasure it was to welcome back so many old faces from the parish's long history, some of whom we hadn't seen for many a long day!

I was very sad not to have had more time to talk to Canon Foot, the Very Rev. Callaghan and Mr Kinnock, who used to be our lay preacher.

It was touching that they all wanted to come up to give me their ideas. And, no doubt, in the friendliest possible way, they would have wanted to suggest that things were better in their day!

That's old people for you! They always look back on the past with rose-tinted spectacles. But when you look at it, you usually find the reality was very different.

Take Canon Foot, for example. He's a sweet old soul, with his white hair, his walking stick and his little dog.

But, frankly, if he'd been allowed to run the parish, the pews would soon have been empty and the whole place would have been shut down!

As for Rev. Callaghan, well, no offence to Jim, but he was the worst vicar this parish has ever had! And that's being kind! If it wasn't for the fact that his daughter Margaret is now one of the most respected members of the parish team, and really getting things moving in the Sunrise Home For Friends Of The Vicar (formerly the Sunset Home For Distressed Gentlefolk), I might have a lot more to say on this topic!

Look. It's all very well getting nostalgic about the way things used to be done in the old days. But the fact is no one's really interested in all that stuff any more.

At the party, it was noticeable that most people didn't know the words of those dreary old Victorian hymns some people wanted to sing, such as "There Is A Red Flag Far Away". But I think myself that's a good sign, because it means we're looking forward to the future! And the future is now!

In fact, it's been the future for the last

three years! Ever since I took over. It's about time some of these old people realised it, and stayed away!

Incidentally, I would like to make it clear that I never recommended Mr Sainsbury's GM guacamole or tomatofish soup!

I always made it clear that while, on the one hand, GM foods could clearly be enormously beneficial to mankind and very tasty, on the other hand, it is quite possible that they could be highly toxic and destructive to the environment.

That has been my position all along, and you could not want a clearer statement than that! So much for the people who say I can't make my mind up!

And before I finish, I would just like to commend the wonderful poem elsewhere on this page penned by my very good friend, Melvyn!

Yours, Tony

Thought For The Week

AMID all the silly tittle-tattle about the choice of our friend Mr Dobson to play the part of the Lord Mayor of London in this year's St Albion's pantomime being rigged and "a fix", let me remind parishioners what it says in the Good Book, "The first shall be last, and the last first". So, the fact is that since Mr Livingstone came first in the popularity stakes, and Mr Dobson was last, the Bible tells us that Mr Dobson should be the winner. And I hope no one is going to argue with Holy Scripture! T.B.

Verses From A Local Poet

In Defence Of Tony

All the knockers are out for Tony,
They call him a traitor and a phoney.
They even say that I'm a "crony",
But I say that is just "baloney"!

Tony Blair is a perfect wonder,
He's not committed a single blunder!
Tony is handsome, nice and clever,
And, what's more, he's the best vicar ever!

M. Barg, South Bankside.

To Remember In Your Prayers

● Rosalind Mark, who has let everyone down very badly after she worked as a nanny at the vicarage and then sold her story to the St Albion Messenger. Pray that she may be taken to court and punished severely with the full rigour of the law and be forced to repay any moneys paid to her and then made to serve a custodial sentence of three terms of life to run concurrently. May God forgive her because Cherie and I will find it very difficult to do so. T.B.

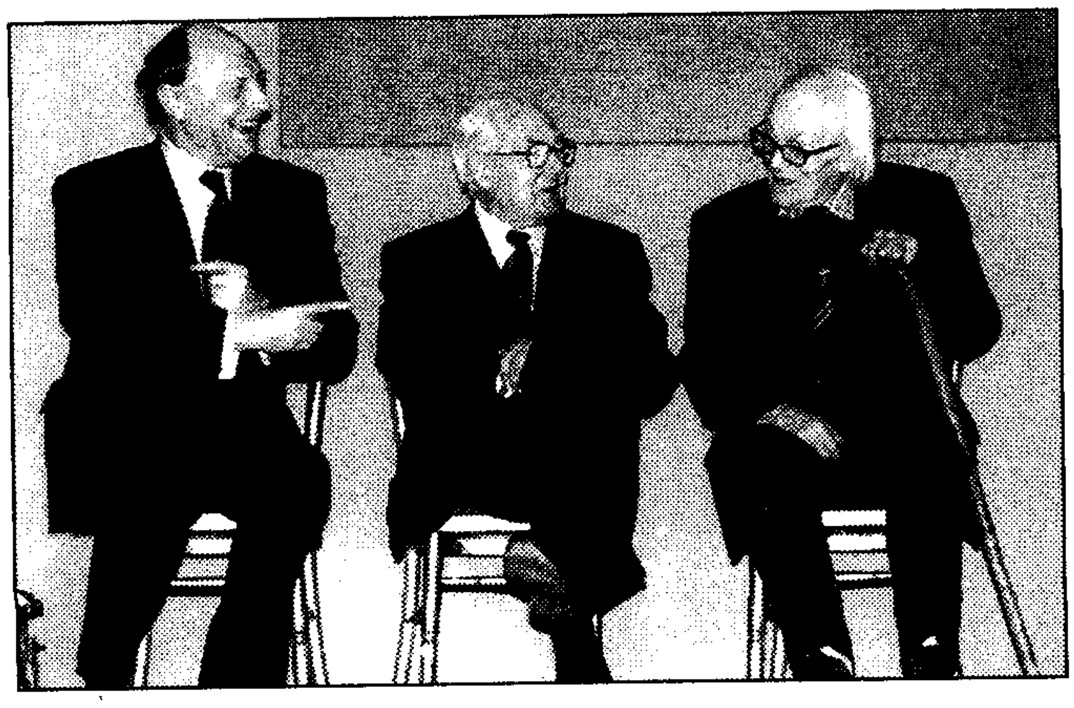
MILLENNIUM TENT LATEST

Half-term was a tremendous success for the tent. Hundreds of children had to be turned away. Well done everyone concerned (especially our new French friend M. Gerbil who has come over to help out with the car parking arrangements). T.B.

Notice

A SERVICE OF EXCOMMUNICATION WILL BE HELD NEXT SUNDAY

Mr Ken Livingstone will be cast into utter darkness. Kids, please bring a candle! T.B.



100th Birthday Party

Three of our pensioners take part in a special version of the popular TV game *Blind Date*. In our version "Blind Dotage" parishioners had to choose which of the three was best suited to run the parish. The answer was Number Four, of course: The Vicar! T.B.

Abdication Crisis Latest

That Shock Queen Mother Letter They Tried To Ban

by Our Abdication Staff **Wallace and Gromit Simpson**

Dear Monkton,

I have to write to you to express my deep concern over this frightful woman who seems to have her hooks into Teddles. She really is letting the side down, and everyone says she is perfectly awful. It's all too, too ghastly for poor George. Can't you say something to Edward yourself? Otherwise the British Empire could soon collapse.

Yours,
ELIZABETH
The Queen Daughter.

PS. I'm told your grandson is going to turn out a frightful twit. I'm so sorry.

"What's this about you tying a kangaroo down, Mr Harris?"

CLINTON BUBBLE COMPETITION

Readers are invited to submit speech bubbles for this recently published photograph of President Clinton and Queen Sofia of Spain.

Entries to Clinton Competition, Private Eye, 6 Carlisle St, London W1V 5RG by Friday 17 March.

The winner(s) will receive signed copies of the hardback collection of Craig Brown's Diaries.

Cupid stunt ruins sleazy motel's love shenanigans

Catholic Times

Late News

MOZAMBIQUE FLOOD WORSENS

BRITAIN is still suffering this week from a huge flood of self-righteousness which has swept across the country bringing dangerously high levels of cant in its wake.

Starting on the Today programme, then rapidly spreading to Newsnight and the rest of the media, this tidal wave of sanctimoniousness has devastated large numbers of distressed British ministers, development officials and aid agency spokespeople.

They have been swamped by angry questions from journalists (reading from hastily prepared researchers' notes) demanding to know "Why have you not rescued more drowning people?", "Where are those vital Puma helicopters?" and "How dare you try and say that you are doing your best to someone like me who has been an expert on Mozambique since 5 minutes ago?"

Apparently, more floods of this guff are on the way.

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Ernest Luff, Famous Boy Soprano

So. Farewell then
Ernest Luff,
Famous boy soprano.

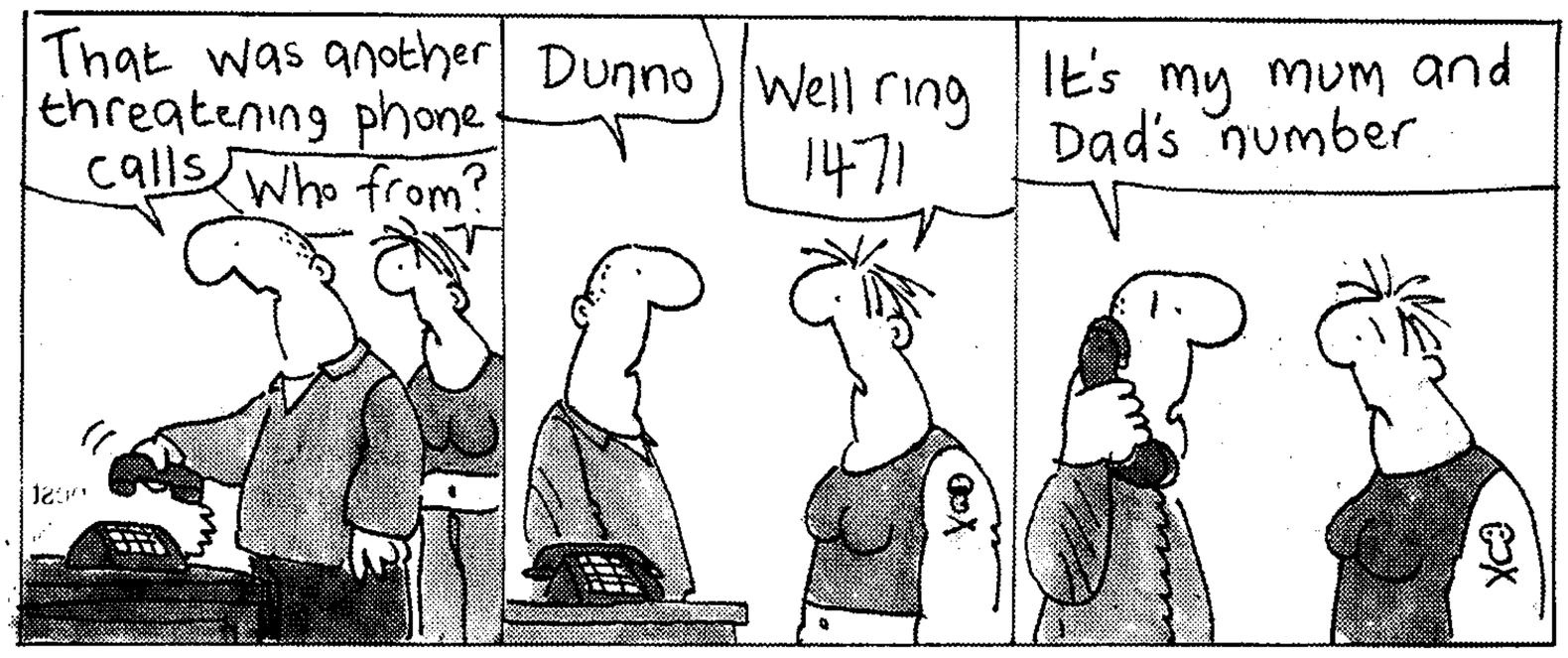
"O For The Wings
Of A Dove."

That was your catchphrase.

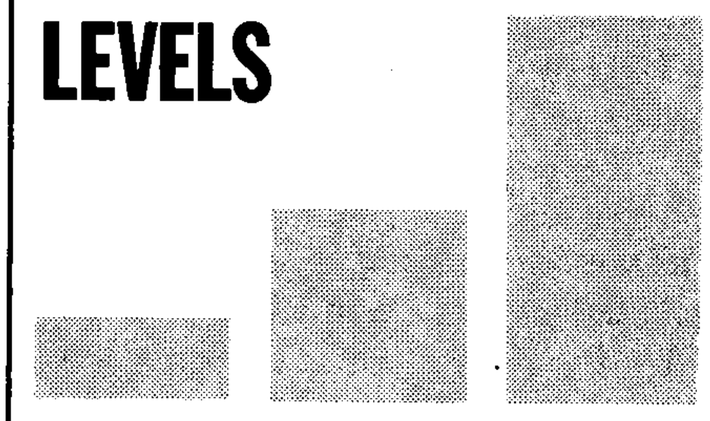
And now
You've probably got them.

Ernest J. Thribb
Boy Poet (aged 13½)

HUSBAND



LONDON STREET CRIME HITS RECORD LEVELS



The Mirrionaire
Friday March 10 2000
www.mirror.con

UPWARD WITH THE FOOTSIE !

WOTALOTIGOT!

HAPPY Piers Moron, 34, is laughing all the way to the Blank!

Thanks to yet another brilliant share tip from your Mirror City tipsters (who have sadly been sacked this week).

One day Piers was just an ordinary newspaper editor struggling along on £300,000 a year.

The next day he read the Mirror's share tips and became an overnight millionaire.

"It will not change my way of life," said a jubilant Piers. "I will go on editing the Mirror even though everyone thinks I should resign."

And Piers's boss Sir Victor Blank-Cheque is right behind him.

"I am delighted Piers has agreed to carry on working despite his good fortune," he said.

Piers was not the only lucky winner. He was part of an office syndicate, along with his deputy-editor, the City staff and most of the other journalists.

Between them, they received a record pay-out of £1 million.

YOUR PROBLEMS Miriam

THE ADVICE COLUMN YOU CAN TRUST

Dear Miriam...

I AM 34 and I have a real problem getting my shares up. What do you advise?

PM, Canary Wharf.

Dear Piers...

THERE'S something new on the market that's just what you're looking for!

It's called Viaglen, and it works wonders. Buy a large packet, and watch your shares shoot up – and stay up!

Miriam.

Dear Miriam...

Do you think three-in-a-bed is wrong? Just recently my friend and I were duped by a long-time lover, and the very same day we got into bed with a very kind Egyptian gentleman.

He's very generous and gives us lots of presents. Is this wrong?

Yours, Anil Intercourse and James Knobswell.

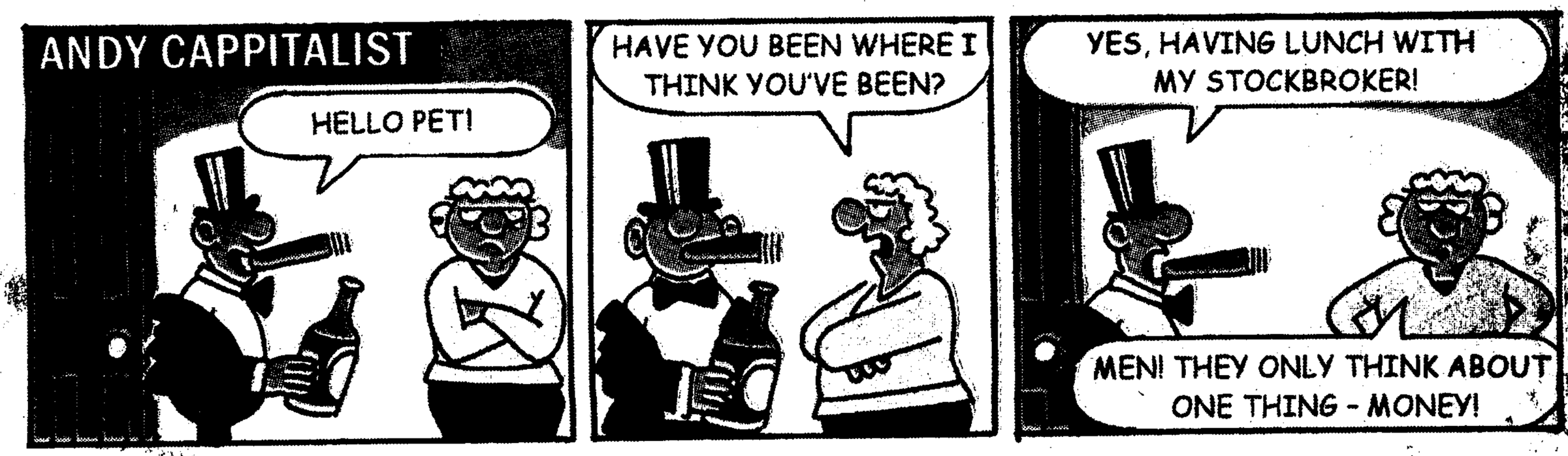
Dear Anil and James...

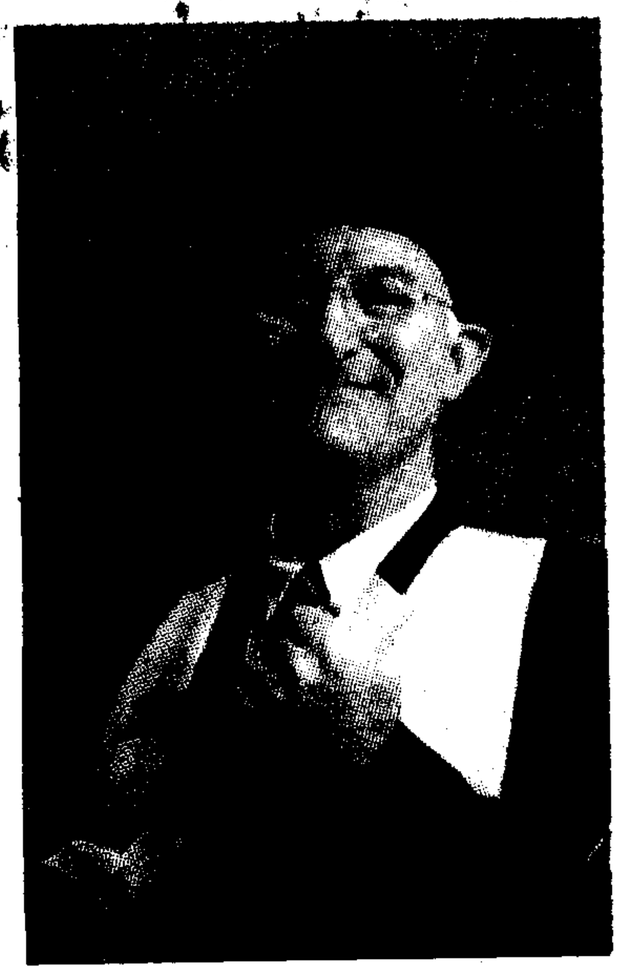
LOOK, don't be embarrassed! We've long gone past the days when people thought having money with each other was wrong!

Go with the flow – and make money with your new Egyptian sugar daddy.

Yours,
Dr Miriam Stoppaford.

Tomorrow: We banked 5 times a night – should we be ashamed?


ANDY CAPPITALIST
HELLO PET!
HAVE YOU BEEN WHERE I THINK YOU'VE BEEN?
YES, HAVING LUNCH WITH MY STOCKBROKER!
MEN! THEY ONLY THINK ABOUT ONE THING - MONEY!



That Birt Citation In Full

SALUTAMUS JOHANNEM BIRTUM EX-DALEKUS GENERALIS BRITANNICI TELEVISIONIS CORPORATIONE ET EXPERTO TECHNICUS MANAGERIALIS QUI REFORMAT MORIBUNDEM INSTITUTIONEM TOTALITER ET APPOINTAVIT MILLIONES HOMINES IN SUITIBUS QUI COMPILAVERUNT MULTOS "FLOWCHARTOS" ET CREAVERUNT INNUMERABILE "FOCOS GROUPOS" PER QUO BIRTUS MERITABIT SALARIUM ASTRONOMICUM (MMMMCC LIBROS PER ANNUM) NON DECLARATUS AD TAXOS HOMINES ET MULTOS "PERKOS" INCLUSUS, EXEMPLI GRATIA, TOGA ARMANI, ET MACHINA RANGE ROVERIA QUATRO-PER-QUATRO PER UTILITATE UXORIS SUIS JANUS BIRTICA. ET CREATOR NOVAE LINGUAE UNIVERSALIS "BIRTSPEAK" NON COMPREHENSIBILIS. FINALITER IN RECOGNITIONE SERVICIUM PUBLICUM AD BONUS AMICUM ANTONINUS BLAIRUS (PONTIFEX SUPREMUS UNIVERSUS ETC) FACTUS EST DOMINUS BIRTUS, ET NUNC SCRIPTOR AUTOBIOGRAPHICUS INTERMINABILIS ET TEDIOSISSIMUS, NOMINATUS "APOLOGIA PRO VITA VIDA".

ISSUED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD (FORMERLY WAKEFIELD SCHOOL OF HOTEL CATERING AND SECRETARIAL STUDIES)

BLAIR ADMITS 'GM FOODS CARRY RISKS'

by Our Political Correspondent
Hugh Turn

THE PRIME Minister today angrily denied suggestions that he was backtracking after he conceded that GM foods do carry a certain amount of risk.

"All along, I have said I would only make up my mind once all the appropriate data was in," said Mr Blair. "And, having received the latest MORI poll, it's now clear to me that my endorsement of GM technology has indeed proved harmful to my personal popularity levels.

"And, as such, I recommend any politician wanting to enjoy a long and healthy career to stay well clear of them."

Late News

SPECTATOR DEMANDS IMMEDIATE GUARDIAN 'DECOMMISSIONING'

by Our N. Ireland Correspondent

TROUBLE between the traditionally hostile Spectator and Guardian communities has broken out once again after the Guardian refused the Spectator's demands to "decommission its pro-IRA views".

The Guardian in turn accused the Spectator of being "nothing more than the Parajournalistic wing of the extreme Unionists".

Observers hoped that talks between Gerry Rusbridger and Boris Trimble might lead to a negotiated settlement, but negotiations faltered amidst vicious recriminations about *(continued over 94 pages)*

TV Highlights

The Peter Principle (BBC1)

Hilarious consequences ensue as the bumbling Secretary of State Peter Mandelson [Jim Broadbent] inadvertently dissolves the Northern Ireland Assembly and must yet again explain his actions to Tony, the branch manager.

EYE RATING: Hopelessly contrived farce

New Films

The Talented Mr Mandy (PG).

Homo-erotic drama about a good-looking but amoral adventurer who is sent by his friend Tony to bring back peace from Northern Ireland. But Mandy is soon sucked into a dark vortex that can only end in disaster.

EYE RATING: Disappointing

Theatre

At the Old Vic for one night only
Labour's Luvvies Lost!

Starring Stephen "Fry and Laurie" Fry, Tony "TV's Time Team" Robinson, Prunella "Mrs Fawlty and TV Tesco Ad" Scales, Timothy "TV's Churchill or was that Robert Hardy?" West *plus* a host of other people whose names you can't quite remember.

The fun begins when everyone simultaneously falls in love with Antonio. But is he really who they think he is? Or is it a case of mistaken identity? And can Antonio keep them all believing that he loves them too?

EYE RATING: Risible farce

'PLEASE LET ME DIE' Lord Longford's Shock Plea

by **Charles Moors-Murderers**

THE 112-year-old Labour peer Lord Longford has been incarcerated in the House of Lords for most of his adult life.

Every day his routine is the same. He writes letters to the Times asking for the release of Myra Hindley and Ian Brady.

But now he has had enough, and is pleading with the authorities to be allowed to die in peace and dignity.

PACKIN-EM IT IN

Yesterday his oldest friend Miss Hindley said "I have known Frank for many years, and he is utterly sincere in his beliefs. He is a devout Catholic and during his time inside has made genuine efforts to better himself, by writing hundreds of books and becoming a Knight of the Garter.

"But now this poor old man has had enough. And all he asks is to be allowed to slip away live on Question Time, while answering a question on the Moors Murderers."

Lord Longlife is 342.

On Other Pages

"Please Let Me Die But In Chile" — General Pinochet's Shock Plea

In Today's Ghouldian

Exclusive extracts from the Rusbridger Letters in G2

"I WAS naïve and foolish and when Myra Hindley came into my life I was instantly attracted to the possibility of putting in long and graphic accounts of disgusting serial killings in the hope of titillating my supposedly right-on readers. And once I started serialising I couldn't stop."

In tomorrow's Ghouldian Rusbridger reveals how he was "only obeying orders" to put in a lot of stuff about Adolph Eichmann.

The **Ghouldian Urghh!**

Exclusive to all newspapers

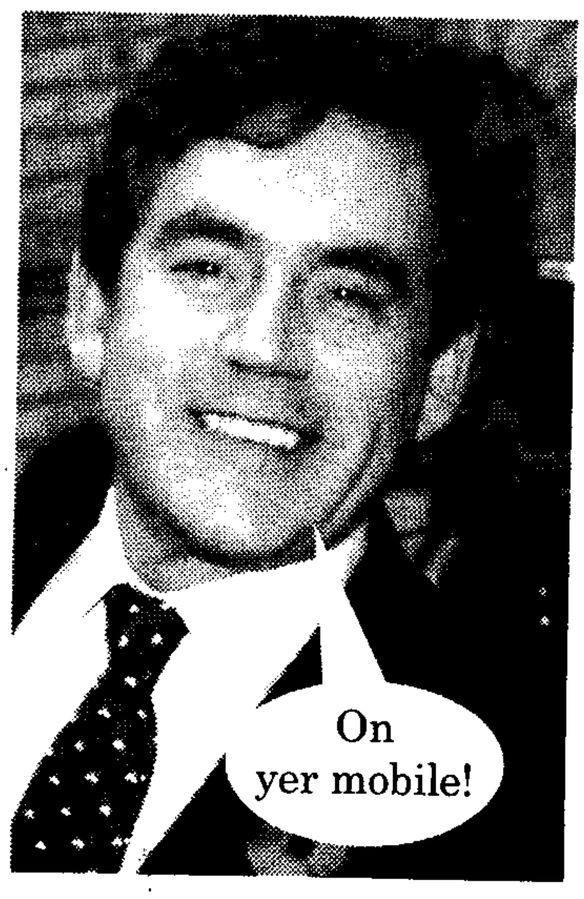
'I'M NOT JUST MRS JONATHAN ROSS'

SAYS MRS JONATHAN ROSS

by Our Showbiz Staff **Phil Space**

A WOMAN with red hair today told the world much more than it wanted to know about her relationship with a man who appears on television.

TEBBIT'S EMPLOYMENT POLICY REVISITED



Lines Written On The 50th Anniversary Of Sir Edward Heath's Entry Into The House Of Commons

by **William Rees-McGonagall**

It was in the year nineteen hundred and fifty
When young Edward Heath was thinner and more nifty
That he first took his seat on the Tory backbenches
And unlike his colleagues had no eye for the wenches.

When he arrived they all said, "Ted's a bit of a bore,
But the fact is, old boy, he had a bloody good war.
And although he talks in an odd-sounding voice,
For the job of Chief Whip he's the obvious choice."

Then in the year nineteen hundred and sixty-two
Mr Macmillan said, "I've got an even more
important job for you to do.
We've got to join this Common Market show
So off to Brussels with your Belgian
phrasebook you must go."

Mr Heath did his utmost his leader to please
By negotiating a special rate for such foodstuffs
as Commonwealth cheese.
So Britain to her neighbours was brought even closer
And for his pains Mr Heath was soon
christened "The Grocer".

Then when the Tories got rid of Sir A. Douglas-Home
They decided it was time for a classless new broom.
"We cannot have another Old Etonian gent,
We'd better try this common little oik from Kent."

And so it was that after five years then
The Grocer arrived in triumph at "Number Ten".
But, alas, he was not intended to stay there for long
After his 3-day week went so disastrously wrong.

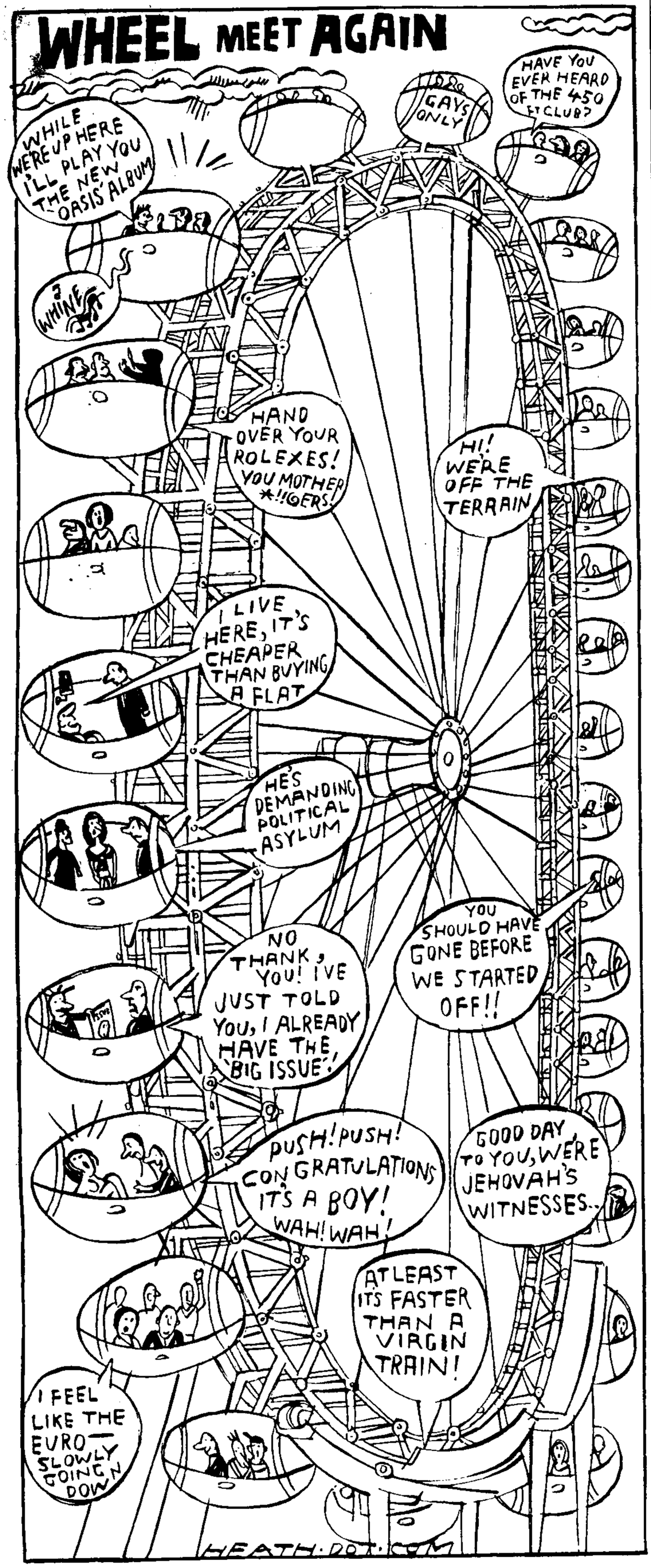
And all too soon it was curtains for Ted
When the Tory Party chose Mrs Thatcher instead.
Edward moved to the backbenches his increasing bulk
Where he embarked on the world's longest-ever sulk.

For 30 years he sat there and glowered
At the woman the Tories had so cruelly empowered.
Not since the noble Achilles retired to his tent
Had there been such a sulker as the Grocer from Kent.

And so in his 50th parliamentary year
He came to look back over his long and glorious career.
What had he achieved, this octogenarian bachelor?
Only to be annoyed by "that woman",
Mrs Margaret Thatchler.

This tribute in verse was commissioned and paid for by the Anglo-Chinese Poetry and Trade Society, in association with the Rev. Sun K. Moon, Universal Church of Money Inc. of Seoul.

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


WHEEL MEET AGAIN
WHILE WE'RE UP HERE I'LL PLAY YOU THE NEW OASIS ALBUM
GAYS ONLY
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE 450 FT CLUB?
I WHINE
HAND OVER YOUR ROLEXES! YOU MOTHER *!!@ERS!
HI! WE'RE OFF THE TERRAIN
I LIVE HERE, IT'S CHEAPER THAN BUYING A FLAT
HE'S DEMANDING POLITICAL ASYLUM
YOU SHOULD HAVE GONE BEFORE WE STARTED OFF!!
NO THANK, YOU! I'VE JUST TOLD YOU, I ALREADY HAVE THE 'BIG ISSUE'.
PUSH! PUSH! CONGRATULATIONS IT'S A BOY! WAH! WAH!
GOOD DAY TO YOU, WE'RE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES..
AT LEAST IT'S FASTER THAN A VIRGIN TRAIN!
I FEEL LIKE THE EURO — SLOWLY GOING DOWN
HEATH.DOT.COM

Mason's Garage in Carlisle is one dealership where the Dealer Principal Ray Helm has recognised the increasing need to service women customers. He is creating firm policies towards female drivers, which he recognises are important to the future of his business

Duckhams Oils press release

In view of your experience and in line with the terms of the Passengers' Charter, I am pleased to enclose travel vouchers to the value of £ 0.00. I hope that you will find the vouchers useful to put towards a more pleasant journey with us soon.

South West Trains

The Daily Torygraph

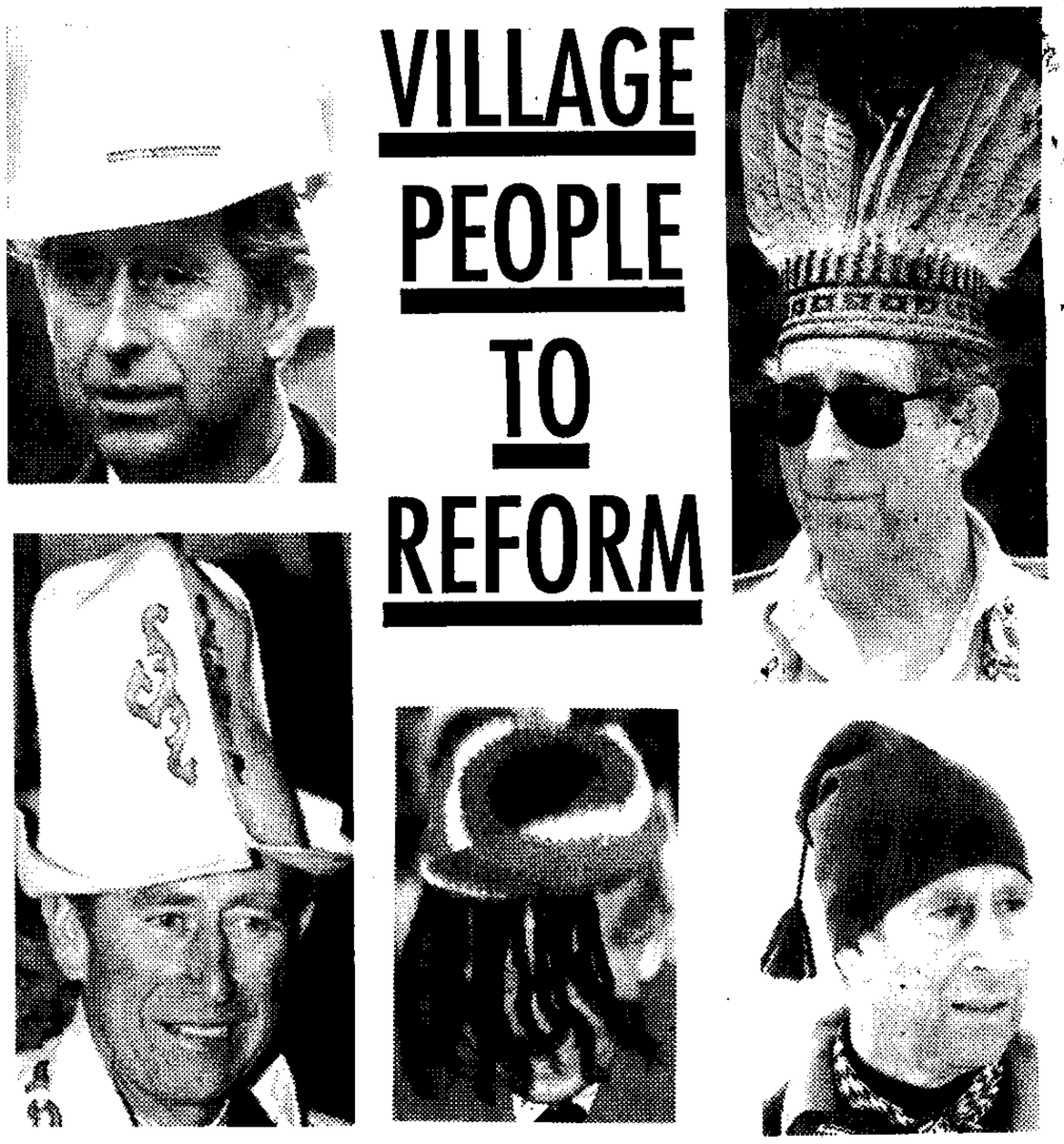
100 Years Of Labour Failure

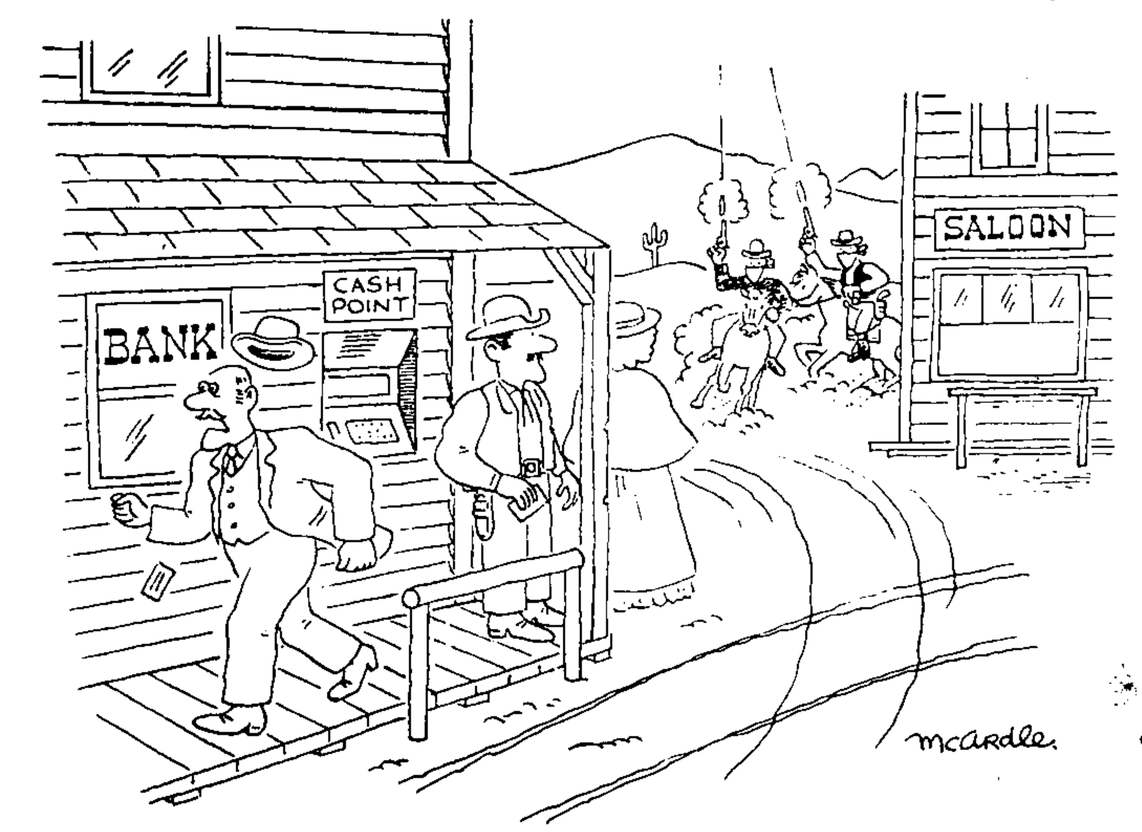
THE history of the Labour party in Britain over the last century has been a sorry catalogue of failure and disaster.

It is with some regret that we have to ask ourselves what, if anything, has the Labour Party achieved in all this time?

Nothing. Apart from perhaps the foundation of the NHS. And an improvement in working conditions for the ordinary man. But apart from the NHS, working conditions and, yes, a version of social justice, what successes can Labour point to? So they took us into NATO, and have proved surprisingly patriotic, taking a stand against both Nazism and communism. But apart from this, the NHS, the working conditions, and the social justice stuff and their attempts to bring about a fairer society, what has Labour ever done? OK, they have recently cancelled Third World debt, but if you discount this and the NHS and the (*continued p. 94*)

VILLAGE PEOPLE TO REFORM





"Run for it – it's the hole-in-the-wall gang!"

DIARY

I would say broadly yes, but first, let me make one thing absolupely clear. The BBC will continue to set a benchmark for qualitity standards against which all other benchmarks may be judged. What exactly do I mean by this? I mean this: that by this I mean what I do. But first we must ask ourselves the question: what exactly do we *mean* when we talk of a "benchmark"? Good question. Well, every household in the UK has two or more benches. They may be in the garden or in the house or on the roof, but they are very much part of the furniture. Are they marked? Well, we feel that they should be. And it's those benchmarks that we have always provided, that we will continue to provide and that we are absolupely determined to go on providing in a digital age.

But first let's look to the future. Don't tell me that in five, ten, fifteen years, people are going to want the same benchmarks. We are entering an age when you may be able to stack those benches, you may be able to move them indoors and outdoors at the flick of a switch, weather permuting, you may even be able to squeeze three or four people onto the same bench, or you may prefer to turn the bench upside down and sit on a leg. It's your choice. So I promise you this. In ten years' time, you'll look back and agree with me that we were right to set a benchmark by which all the other benchmarks may be judged.

Creative people. Here at the BBC, we regard them as a valuable asset. In the old days, they would be allowed to produce and take part in wordy television plays without detectives or housewives stripping off. But do we really want to return to those far-off days? In this digital age, we direct their resources to more useful areas. For example, how to turn a backyard into an enchanted garden, full of imaginative shrubs, rich autumnal colours and crazy paving? For a "makeover" like that, you turn to – yes – a creative person. And have you ever thought of stripping out that old 1950s wallpaper from the upstairs bedroom and replacing it with something in vivid oranges and bright, bright yellows? Send for the creative task force! Small wonder that I sometimes tell my colleagues that if Shakespeare were alive today, he'd be working right here in the BBC on a freelance contract, swapping makeover tips with the excellent Alan Titchmarsh.

SIR CHRISTOPHER BLAND
CHAIRMAN OF THE BBC

'Twas ever thus. Brideshead Revisited. The Jewel in the Crown. News at Ten. World at War. All absolupely first-rate series from the BBC. And it's no good you trying to tell me that spreading our scarce resources into a variety of new and exciting 24 hour multi-channel digital and on-line services will damage our output. Absolupe nonsense. In my experience, the less of a financial hand-out you give a programme, the better the quality of the finished product.

Quite simply, our choice is clear: sink or swim. Our critics would argue that we should automatically click on "swim", with no regard to weighing up all the other economic options. Well, they're perfectly entitled to their absurd opinion. And that, may I add, is why they never rose to be Chairman of the BBC!

No: we have gone into the whole business at considerable length, and it seems to us absolupely crystal clear that, in a multi-channel age, we must press ahead with the "sink" option. And how, then, are we going to "sink"? That's a perfectly valid question, and one which I shall now answer. We have in place a very carefully thought out plan for a two-point sinking strategy for the next ten to fifteen years. By the year 2015, we are all set to have secured ourselves a central position on the seabed of international broadcasting, leaving the production of programmes to those who are much better equipped to do it.

The strategy?

First, we redirect valuable resources to those areas where they are least needed – thus liberating extra funds for the things we are able to do less well.

Second, we rethink exactly what we mean by "quality" programming. And ask ourselves whether, in this digital 24 hour on-line age, "quality" is really the cul-de-sac down which we wish to channel our much-needed resources. Do we really *want* to be "educated"? Absolupely not. We know quite enough already, and independent economists tell us that any more knowledge would be surplus to requirements. Do we really have the time to go chasing after "truth", "beauty" and the rest of it? The answer must be "No". They are a drain on resources, and irrelevant to the needs of a digital age. If "quality" today can be said to mean anything at all, it surely means, in a nutshell, "that which a reasonable percentage of viewers may quite enjoy in peak-time hours, providing there isn't anything significantly more exciting on the other side."

For goodness sake, let's not be ashamed to blow our own trumpet. BBC News 24 has been one of the corporation's great success stories of recent years. And it's the way ahead. Now, viewers can tune into a major disaster in a third world country when and where they want, rather than having to wait for it for hours on end – *and that must be a good thing*.

And a new, less formal approach to news-gathering is set to become the hallmark of our benchmark of quality in a digital age –

"Any fresh news of tragic victims yet, Keith?" "Not as such, Sally – but we're hoping for an announcement shortly" "What's the atmosphere like, then, Keith?" "Very tense but very hopeful, Sally – they're saying there could be anything up to a hundred new tragedies expected, including a fair number of children, so fingers crossed..." "Bless you, Keith! Like the tie! And now over to Sue with the traffic news – any major pile-ups yet, Sue?"

Relaxed. Informative. Personal. But above all *quality news-based entertainment for a broad spectrum of very average viewers*. I am proud to have secured a future for BBC television. Though frankly I don't watch it myself. These days, there's so little worth watching, don't you find?

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER

THE FIRST TIME I DID NUDE SHOTS FOR A LADS' STYLE MAG I WAS A BIT WORRIED HOW MY FATHER WOULD REACT.
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
SO RATHER THAN JUST LET HIM FIND OUT, I SENT HIM THE PHOTOGRAPHS AND THEN RANG HIM TO TELL HIM WHAT I'D DONE.
SO WHAT DID HE SAY?
HE SAID: "DEBS, WARS ARE GOING ON. PEOPLE ARE BEING KILLED. YOUR NAKED BODY IN A MAGAZINE IS NO BIG DEAL."
GEEZ! WHAT A CRUEL AND HURTFUL THING TO SAY!
I KNOW. HE'S ALWAYS BEEN DISPARAGING OF MY CAREER. THE TYRANT.

Literary Review

Pen pals

New Writing Nine
A.L. Kennedy and John Fowles, eds
(Vintage, £9.99)

OVER the past few years an odd streak of defensiveness has crept into the public pronouncements of that fine old body, the literature department of the British Council.

In particular Englit's export division has been running a long series of column-length ads in the *London Review of Books* nervously recapitulating its activities and outlay while altogether failing to dispel the popular reputation of an up-market literary travel agency eager to facilitate the progress of a select band of youngish writers around the globe.

No, I'm not being cynical; and, yes, the British Council does some inestimable work; but, really, the number of times persons such as Tibor Fischer, Lawrence Norfolk and Miss Kennedy feature in their deliberations make one rather doubt that when the cry comes up for someone to read their short stories in Oporto some council official opts to draw the names out of a hat.

Similarly no amount of breast-beating can disguise the glorious assemblage of favours done and old pals' acts that is the annual *New Writing* volume, published in association with Vintage, who are, by the way, an imprint of Random House. This year's editors, for example, are A.L. Kennedy (who contributes the no-nonsense introduction) and John Fowles, both of whom are published by Jonathan Cape, an imprint of Random House.

Of the 60-plus contributors, between a quarter and a third turn out to be, or have been, published by Cape, Chatto & Windus or Secker & Warburg, which are of course... imprints of Random House. Liberally estimated, perhaps half-a-dozen of this horde are people you won't have heard of or those with no publishing track record.

New writing, then, but not, alas, by new writers. Anthologies of this kind conform to an invariable pattern - quite good stuff from the up-and-coming; quite bad stuff from famous names whom the editors always hope will come up with the goods but are prone to offer chips from the workbench. In the latter category repose Tim Parks' three-page musing on *Eros*, Louis de Bernieres' poem sequence *London Voices* and a piece by Robert Irwin entitled *Your Novel Needs Indexing*. A special place — somewhere a long way off — must be reserved for Don Paterson's *Aphorisms* (sample: "Sometimes I have the fantasy of passing an enormously long unbroken shit, and then looking down to find my brain coiled in the pan. I cannot accept that this shared morphology is coincidental.") which would have been immediately been transferred to this week's Pseud's Corner had not the space already been claimed by Hamish Whyte's *Switch on the Waves*.

Theoretically critics use these things to talent-spot. Well, I thought Vivienne Vermes *The Spaces in Houses* — about a woman living in the country haunted simultaneously by her Jewishness and the sound of a rat burrowing through the ceiling — particularly good. However, the one to watch is someone called Trezza Azzopardi. I base this prediction not on the merits of the novel in progress extracted here — considerable, as it happens — but on the fact that a) Ms Azzopardi is a recent graduate of the UEA writing, b) is the dedicatee of Andrew Motion's *Wainewright The Poisoner*, and c) will be having the whole of the book in question published by Picador in June. I mean, with friends and attributes like that, who can go wrong? Remember, you read it here first.

W.G. Graceless

Vertigo. W.G. Sebald
(Harvill, £16.99/£12)

EVERY so often in the upper reaches of English literary society there can be heard the collective exhalation of breath characteristic of high-grade opinion formers avid, in an age of trivialisation and debasement, to turn up something that can be classified as genius.

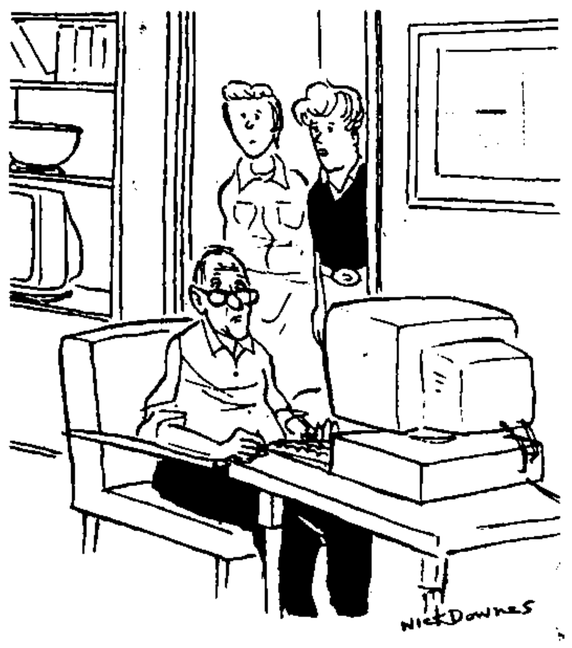
The current candidate, benefiting from a steady drip of approbation in the highbrow papers these three years past, is W.G. Sebald. Only the other week Susan Sontag opened a two-page encomium in the *TLS* by wondering if literary greatness were still possible ("Given the implacable devolution of literary ambition, and the concurrent ascendancy of the tepid, the glib and the senselessly cruel as normative fictional subjects" — gosh, you can't buy a style like that over the internet, can you?) before instantly deciding that Sebald, even whose first book was as "exotic as it was irrefutable" (*what?*), was our man.

All this will doubtless be highly gratifying to W.G., a middle-aged and slightly anguished-looking German expat currently holding down a professorial day job at the University of East Anglia. Sebald's three "books" — highbrow debates continue to rage over whether to call them novels — follow a distinctive path.

Each (*The Emigrants*, 1996, *The Rings of Saturn*, 1998 and now the current offering, first published in Germany 10 years back) finds a narrator called W.G. Sebald wandering about somewhere, musing in a low-key and melancholic fashion about mortality and modern ghastliness and drawing in a long line of literary and artistic associations.

Needless to relate, this kind of "passionate bleakness" (Sontag) goes down a storm with a certain kind of up-market literary pundit (assembled cheerleaders include A.S. Byatt, Michael Ondaatje, Alain de Botton and Geoff Dyer). There is the melancholia — a year after the Suffolk tour Sebald ended up in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital "in a state of almost total immobility" — the threnodies for a lost Eden, the Proustian reminiscence, above all those threads of cultural connection winding back across time, so cheering to the average literary man and woman stuck in a barbarous age with nothing to sustain them save art.

What should we think about W.G? One myth we certainly shouldn't believe is that of the diffident, scholarly and altogether unworldly author. It turns out that Sebald's agent is the legendarily rapacious Andrew Wylie, who has just sold his client's latest manuscript for some fantastic sum to Viking, thereby dumping the kind people at Harvill whose efforts made the author his reputation. Melancholy, high art and limpid reflection — such attributes are all very well, but you wonder whether a little old-fashioned loyalty might not also have been in order.



"I'm afraid Raymond waited a bit too long to write his memoirs."

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ ORION's appallingly rude Anthony "Fatty" Cheetham may be hounding Ion Trewin in an effort to get him to leave (see last *Eye*), but it now emerges that the agreeable Weidenfeld boss is in fact likely to survive longer than his rotund tormentor.

The group's French owner Hachette has been slowly coming to the conclusion that Fatty sold them a pup — an impression not aided by the Christmas 1998 meltdown at Orion's LBS distribution subsidiary, which took nine months, a complete management clearout and a huge injection of French money to resolve.

Having scrutinised the figures, it now also believes that the group's acquisition of Cassell in October 1998 was less the bold strategic move it was claimed to be and more a swift bit of window dressing to hide a blip in the accounts.

■ AS speculation about who will replace Eddie "Arturo McBastard" Bell at HarpicCollins increases, with names such as Random House's Simon Master and former Transworld UK chief Steve Rubin in the frame, so do suggestions that the Glaswegian former whisky rep did not in fact leave voluntarily.

A letter from an apparently anonymous source in the publisher's Hammersmith office has been circulating, upbraiding the trade press for the way it bought the official version. It calls the *Bookseller* "a slimy creepy thing" and suggests that *Publishing News*' 'Nice Guy Eddie' approach to the Bell story was somewhat wide of the mark.

According to the Bellettriste *(sic)*, there is trouble at the firm because of the huge advances that were being issued to authors who were not earning out. The amount of unrecoupable cash tied up in Barbara Taylor Bradford alone is said to be more than $8m.

■ EX-BBC director-general John Birt had a difficult time selling his two-volume autobiography to publishers. He told Fourth Estate boss Victoria Barnsley about his plans for the first volume to cover his life and the second volume to outline his Theories of Management. La Barnsley said she was not keen on the former but would consider putting the latter "on our humour list". Birt decided to try elsewhere.

'Bookworm'

IN THE BACK

'I make no apology for listening to business'
– Stephen Byers, secretary of state for trade and industry, House of Commons, 2 March 2000

SIEMENS STAIN

AMONG those most interested in the outcome of the London mayoral election are the big firms bidding for a slice of the London underground.

The menace of the mayoral contest suddenly became obvious in December when the building giant Taylor Woodrow pulled out of the New Metro consortium, until then favourite to win the government's tube contract. "High risk", said Taylor Woodrow, meaning that it was scared stiff "Red" Ken Livingstone would become mayor and scrap tube privatisation.

The ballot for Labour's choice of mayor closed on 16 February, and even before Dobson's victory was officially announced. Siemens, Taylor Woodrow's former partner, reentered the bidding.

Siemens has even more to commend it than the dreadful disasters at the passport office and the immigration service (see *Eyes passim ad nauseam*). It is getting a growing reputation throughout Europe as a master-briber.

On 4 February a former official of the Christian Democrat Union (CDU), the German conservative party, revealed that Siemens had given the party £400,000 in the 1980s and 1990s. The money travelled to party coffers illegally, either through a bank account in Zurich or by the time-honoured method of used bank notes in suitcases.

Though the official made his claims in an affidavit, Siemens replied officially and not very convincingly that the firm "had no means of confirming that these payments had been made".

Siemens' affection for Christian Democrats does not stop at Germany. In December the firm was blamed for "importing corruption" by means of suspect funding of the Christian Democrat Party in the Czech Republic. This funding coincided with a swathe of contracts for public works won by Siemens.

Mischievous investigative Czech journalists have compared the corruption there to the sad death last summer of Kim Ki-Sam, former president of Korea's Chosun University. He had been arrested earlier in the year for accepting some £90,000 from the head of a hospital linked to the university. The funds came in "rebates" from Siemens which had won contracts for supplying medical equipment. The vice president of Siemens' subsidiary in Korea mysteriously vanished and several hospital professors were arrested in a flurry of allegations about at least £2.5m worth of bribes.

These latest stories follow others already published in the Eye about Siemens largesse in Spain and Indonesia, where Siemens' partner firm was controlled by the son of former dictator Suharto, "Shitty Shitty", Bam Bam.

In all these cases Siemens offered bribes for government contracts. In New Labour Britain, the tendency is not so much for companies to offer bribes to governments for contracts, but for government to bribe companies to bid for them. While they whine about paying £4m top whack for free postage for mayoral candidates, ministers have raised the "compensation fund" for the about-to-be-privatised tube from £4m to £15m. This means that if Livingstone wins and privatisation falls apart, unhappy big business bidders can apply for cash payments from the taxpayer.

As Arthur Moore of Mowlem, another tube bidder, told the *Daily Telegraph*: "We did have a concern that the government may not be politically committed but now it has raised the compensation fund from £4m to £15m, that's put us a lot more at ease".

LIES, DAM LIES AND STATISTICS

HIGH above the fractious and otherwise unanimous Commons criticism in a debate on 15 February about the Turkish Ilisu dam project rose the shrill voice of Patricia Hewitt, minister for small business and e-commerce.

"It is also worth saying," shrieked the beleaguered Hewitt, "that if Balfour Beatty becomes one of the contractors for the Ilisu dam, it will bring to the project high quality and highly experienced British construction."

Not to say high damages – like the record £1.3m Balfour Beatty had to pay for the collapse of the Heathrow Express tunnel, described by Judge Cresswell as "a disgrace" (*Eye* 969).

And what about bribery? During the debate Hewitt was reminded that Balfour Beatty is charged with bribery in another big dam project in Lesotho, Southern Africa. Recalling no doubt her days at the National Council of Civil Liberties where she staged a coup to become general secretary, Hewitt fumed that no one was guilty until proven so. "Balfour Beatty vigorously deny any such wrongdoing," she fumed.

She did not say that although no one has yet been convicted of giving the bribes over the dam project, the former director of the Lesotho Highland Development Agency, Maphuse Sole, has been convicted of receiving $1.3m in backhanders from the construction firms involved. According to court documents, Balfour Beatty contributed £38,000. But, anyway, it is hard to see how a man can be convicted of taking bribes if no one handed them out.

Another contribution made by Balfour Beatty was $6,000 to the families of the striking workers shot dead by police at Bothe Buthe dam, Lesotho. Balfour Beatty did not admit liability for the deaths but paid the money out of sheer compassion.

One fact Patricia Hewitt probably can recall about Balfour Beatty and its parent BICC is that both firms' accounts are prepared by Arthur Andersen, sister firm to Andersen Consulting, new Labour specialists, who once generously employed Patricia Hewitt as head of research.

WHO DARESBURY LOSES

STEPHEN BYERS, secretary of state for trade and industry, pretends he is an independent man with an independent mind. But like so many "new" Labour ministers he is inclined to accept the views of big business even when they conflict with his own.

Proof of this comes from the strange story of the siting of the synchotron particle accelerator, Britain's biggest single scientific investment for 15 years. The synchotron is currently at Daresbury near Warrington, but the boffins in London regard that as a bit too far north for their liking and want to move it to the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in much more pleasant Oxfordshire.

They are backed by the director of the Wellcome Trust, the biggest charity in the country and the government's funding partner in the synchotron. They are so keen to be in the nice Oxfordshire countryside — and so worried by the fact that there are organised trade unions at the anyway rather beastly Warrington site, that they are threatening to withdraw their £110m investment in the project if it stays at Daresbury.

The secretary of state doesn't agree. He said last autumn that he was "minded" to site the project at Daresbury, making it clear that his decision would take into account the serious impact on jobs if the synchotron left the north-west. He was supported in this view by the House of Commons science and technology select committee, whose chairman, Tory MP Michael Clark, wrote to Byers in January with the committee's conclusion that neither site has "significant advantages" over the other in terms of science, and the secretary of state would have to take his decision "on a broad range of factors", including jobs. This was taken as a clear message, rammed home by a Labour member of the committee, Dr Ian Gibson, that Daresbury was the MPs' choice.

The controversy was sharpened by a man who is meant to be neutral on such matters, Dr John Taylor, director-general of research at the department of trade. Wellcome Trust revealed that Dr Taylor strongly supported the Oxfordshire alternative, but Mr Byers, during an embarrassing grilling at the select committee, eventually agreed that Dr Taylor really had no say in the matter.

It is money that has the say: in this case the millions from the Wellcome Trust. Although the government may end up spending far more than the trust, it now looks very much as if Mr Byers is minded to do the opposite of what he was once minded to do – and move the valuable to site to Oxfordshire.

ABSOLUTELY FUMING...

IN recent evidence to the Australian senate committee inquiry into BAe 146 air safety (see *Eyes passim*), Brendon Treston, of the Flight Attendants Association of Australia, confirmed more than 700 reports of fumes aboard Australian-operated 146 aircraft.

Nor does the problem look like it's going away, with 21 incidents reported by crews between the beginning of September and the end of December 1999. That's approaching two a week.

Not that the airlines see it that way. The previous day the group general manager of Qantas, while admitting that the number of reports seemed to be on the increase, insisted that the problem only affected 0.12 per cent of flights – one report for every 785 flights. And there the matter might have rested had Senator O'Brien not insisted on turning that statistic into something more digestible – and found out that that meant one report every 10 days. And that's just one airline.

While most parties have recently accepted that fumes cause short-term problems, the long-term effects are still hotly debated. Dr Mark Donohoe, with patients allegedly suffering long-term symptoms, spoke of a dirty tricks campaign designed to discredit him before describing the long-term symptoms suffered by his patients.

Dr Robert Loblay, part of an Ansett Airlines "expert panel" which found no evidence of either short or long-term effects, certainly tried to discredit Dr Donohoe, accusing him of practising a "pseudo speciality called clinical ecology". He then offered his opinion that the symptoms were typical of acute hyperventilation, anxiety, and even side effects of taking the oral contraceptive pill.

This infuriated Brendon Treston, who replied: "Flight attendants cannot hyperventilate until they ulcerate their oesophagus or vomit blood. The possibility that that number of flight attendants have hyperventilated themselves into stupefaction over such a long period of time doesn't exist, with all respect to Dr Loblay, which is not much."

Captain Frank Kolver was another unimpressed by Dr Loblay. A pilot for more than 30 years, he was forced to hand over to his co-pilot due to vertigo and disorientation while landing a 146 at Melbourne two years ago. He denied hyperventilating or suffering an anxiety attack, and confirmed that he certainly wasn't on the pill. While still a 146 commercial pilot, Captain Kolver confirmed that he suffers long-term effects that have forced him to take time off work.

In Granada's *What the Papers Say* awards last week, Paul Foot received a special award as campaigning journalist of the decade.

The Joy of Sexism (and Racism)

JOY HENDRICKS is a black police officer in north London who alleges that she has been the victim of racist and sexual abuse since she joined the Metropolitan police in 1987.

In 1995 she sent the Police Federation a long account of her complaints about her treatment in the crack Territorial Support Group. She was advised to "let it go" and reluctantly complied.

In August last year she appeared at Horseferry Road magistrates court charged with assault against a former TSG colleague, Sgt Mark Workman. Backed by another TSG colleague, PC Christopher Blair, he alleged that she had suddenly and irrationally punched him, scratched him, kicked him and attacked him with a snooker cue while a crowd of officers waited in Islington police station to go out on a drugs raid.

Joy Hendricks' evidence was rather different. She said she was insulted and racially mocked as she joined the other officers, and had even been referred to as "Stevie Lawrence No 2".

WPC Joy Hendricks

The case did not go well for the prosecution. After deliberating for no more than five minutes, the magistrate, Eleri Rees, said she had been "troubled" by the police evidence for the prosecution. She also said she felt Joy Hendricks was sincere in believing herself to be a victim of racial and sexual harassment. She had no hesitation in acquitting Joy Hendricks of all charges.

Joy Hendricks is still in the police force, though she has been off sick with stress for nearly a year. During that time she has been trying to get Police Federation funding to sue the Met for racial and sexual discrimination and for malicious prosecution.

The federation initially advised her to consult Russell, Jones and Walker, its long-serving firm of solicitors. She was reluctant to do so. She was not impressed when Russell, Jones and Walker represented her in the snooker cue case. Despite the case's high profile and the very serious consequences of a guilty verdict for Miss Hendricks, the firm was not obliged to have a representative in court and it didn't have one.

The federation was not at all satisfied with her reaction. It insisted on a full explanation why Miss Hendricks refused to consult its recommended solicitors and why she wanted to consult other London solicitors not on the federation approved list.

Joy Hendricks eventually lost patience. On 18 February she wrote to the federation asking for a decision on the funding question within seven days. A few days later, on 24 February, she appeared on BBC's *Newsroom South East* with a superintendent from the Black Police Association, and set out her complaints.

On 28 February the *Eye* sent a series of questions to Metropolitan Police Federation chairman Glen Smyth, who also appeared on the programme. We asked if the federation has been "dragging its feet over this case because of an unnecessarily cosy relationship with the solicitors' firms on your recognised list". On 3 March Joy Hendricks was told to her delight that her solicitors would be funded by the federation, even though they are not on the recognised list.

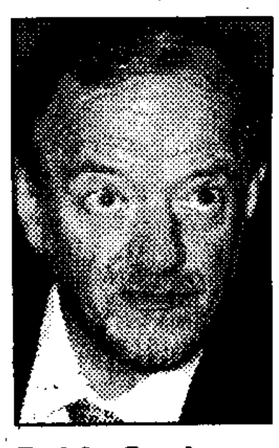
Mr Smyth says he cannot really answer any questions about Joy Hendricks without her specific approval. He denies any unnecessary delays in the Hendricks case. He says the Police Federation attitude to its solicitors is very much the same as in most trade unions. The federation cannot, he said, employ lawyers without first satisfying itself about their reputation and ability. The *Eye* asked whether he thought a line should be drawn between lawyers for police suing members of the public, like journalists, and lawyers for police officers suing the police as their employers. He did not accept that the distinction is relevant.

Arms: no leg to stand on

HARDLY anyone noticed when four Commons select committees (defence, foreign affairs, international development and trade and industry) came together to publish on 11 February a damning report on British arms exports.

Many ministers were embarrassed by the report, and none more so than foreign secretary Robin Cook, whose finest-ever Commons performance was his excoriating attack on the Tory government in February 1996 after the publication of the Scott report into arms sales to Iraq.

Among Scott's recommendations adopted by Cook were:



Robin Cook

● The outdated nature of legislation covering arms exports. (*Whoops!* The committee reports that the legislation is still the same after three years of Labour government).

● People can broker arms deals and even traffic in them, provided the arms don't come into Britain. (*Whoops!* They can and still do so after three years of Labour government).

● The vast majority of funds for arms sales guaranteed by the taxpayer through the export credits guarantee department (ECGD) went to a few dictatorships. (*Whoops!* In 1997, the first year of the Labour government, £225m out of £610m guaranteed by the ECGD for arms sales went to the dictatorship in Saudi Arabia. In 1998, the second year of the Labour government, there was a marked improvement. Of the £740m guaranteed by ECGD for arms sale, £580m went to the Sultan of Brunei.

A few days after the report was published, a mysterious "ministerial source" (believed to be former firebrand Peter Hain) got on to the front page of the *Guardian* to reassure the nation that all these matters would be taken care of in the Queen's speech, which can optimistically be expected round about the end of October.

In the meantime Robin Cook is still learning from his Tory predecessors how to deal with awkward questions about arms sales. Soon after coming to office he was asked about his ethical foreign policy and arms sales to the brutal dictatorship in Indonesia. He replied that it was "neither realistic nor practical" to revoke licences for such arms sales which had been granted by the Tories. There were, he said, around 20,000 licences for such arms sales and to review them all "could have taken us anything up to a year... That was not a practical or a feasible task".

Whoops! That awkward joint select committee managed to get from the government a list of all the licenses valid as of May 1997 for arms exports to Indonesia. These numbered slightly less than 20,000 – er, roughly 125 in fact. The committee report concluded: "It does not take long to review this list. It would have been entirely *practical* to have reviewed the 125 outstanding valid licences."

High Principals

What's Cooking?

■ **WHAT is going on at the *Cook Report*, the regular outlet for Carlton Television's investigative genius Roger Cook (the man who brought you the famous exposé of Colin Stagg as the likely Wimbledon Common murderer, in which the crucial lie-detector test on the programme proved Stagg innocent)?**

All is confusion. An internal inquiry at Carlton is still pursuing concerns raised by a former *Cook Report* producer about unusual investigative techniques. A senior executive has been suspended pending the investigation, and a *Sunday Times* article about the show has produced a libel writ.

Luckily for media studies students at Nottingham Trent University, they can solve these mysteries at first hand. Among their prestigious "visiting professors" is the great investigator himself... Roger Cook!

Spinning Jenny

■ **STAFF at Wirral Metropolitan College are not at all happy about the onward march of Jenny Shackleton, their former principal.**

Ms Shackleton (*Eyes passim ad nauseam* – see nos 930, 949, 950, 967, 969 and 977) resigned rather suddenly shortly before Christmas 1998 just as her chairman and chief executive visited the Further Education Funding Council in Coventry.

Not long afterwards the FEFC announced that the college's affairs had been mismanaged, and the entire governing body duly resigned. Among the many details of mismanagement were the closure of the college's sites at Wallasey and Carlett Park.

Jenny Shackleton

Jenny Shackleton has always been a favourite of "new" Labour and its education secretary David Blunkett, whose response to the Wallasey closure and a protest petition signed by 20,000 people was to do nothing about it and to appoint Ms Shackleton to his crack education and training task force under the famous welfare-to-work initiative.

She is still an adviser to the Training Agency, and a regular member of the education conference circuit. This week she stars as a lecturer at a one-day conference in Harrogate entitled "Reconstructing Further Education for the 21st Century". Her subject? "The management implications of the white paper", including "integrity of funding" and "sticking to purpose". Cost of the day for public sector delegates (probably paid by taxpayers or ratepayers)? £275 plus VAT.

Felling Oaklands

■ **ANOTHER likely beneficiary of the conference of property speculators sponsored by the Further Education Funding Council in London last summer (*Eye* 994) is Oaklands College, St Albans.**

Plans have been leaked to sell off a large chunk of the campus in the centre of St Albans to housing developers, and to build a new home for the engineering and construction departments on green belt land on the outskirts of the city.

Judging by correspondence which has come to the *Eye*, not all students and lecturers are happy with what one of them calls "a tragic and short-sighted sale of the family silver". This view is vehemently rejected by the Further Educational Funding Council, whose spokesman resorted to glowing terms about the college and its plans "to rationalise the estate to achieve better occupancy".

JUST FANCY THAT

"The great and the good, when they've done big jobs, do go on to become vice-chancellors of universities."

— Nick Harvey, *Today, BBC Radio 4, about the resignation of the head of the NHS.*

You can contact Paul Foot on 0171 287 3183 or the In the Back team on 0171 437 4017

In the City

THE Serious Farce Office is likely to look closely at elusive Versailles finance director Fred Clough's relationship with auditors Nunn Hayward who failed to detect the fraud contained within the company's novel and all but impenetrable trade financing techniques.

Versailles appears to be one more example of how small accountancy firms with a big audit to lose always seem to see the numbers add up the way the client wants. Roads first noticeably travelled by Robert Maxwell at Pergamon with Chalmers, Impey in the sixties and since followed by Polly Peck, Brent Walker and Queens Moat Hotels.

INVESTORS in London Clubs International may be surprised to learn that it has still not been approved for licensing by the Nevada gaming regulators despite its ever deepening involvement in the Aladdin casino project in Las Vegas. Only one foreign casino group has ever been allowed into Nevada, which prefers home grown players.

LCI announced a $50m investment in the new Aladdin two years ago. The casino is now expected to cost $1.3bn, par for the course with the new mega-casinos, and is yet to be completed.

LCI has recently increased its involvement to $80m but there are suggestions that, without a financial partner, it may be becoming heavily involved in guaranteeing the Aladdin's capacity to repay its lenders.

The recently opened $1.5bn Venetian is seen as struggling with marketing and debt servicing costs amid fears that billion dollar bets could go badly wrong if interest rates keep rising despite the city of outstretched palms having had a record 1999. LCI shareholders must hope the Aladdin exposure is not getting them in too deep — assuming Nevada allows them to play.

JUST as the life of the great storyteller Jeffrey Archer increasingly imitates his novels, so the efforts of *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan to extricate himself from the deadly embrace of his City Slickers reflects Archer's twists and turns to escape the Anglia TV insider dealing net.

An initial spontaneous version when confronted is replaced by a more detailed and exculpatory but seemingly contradictory explanation when the hunt is on. Both in turn are then undermined by evidence from third parties, in this case from admitted liars trying to save themselves or obtain a pay-off to keep silent about more damaging allegations.

The Department of Timidity & Inaction is for once seeking to belie its nickname by generating great heat, if so far not much light, over the *Mirror* share-dealing scandal. Brokers on the receiving end of DTI interest bleat that they have never experienced such intense pressure. Equipped with its power to interrogate under oath — unlike the limpid internal investigation which the *Mirror* clings to as exonerating "Moron" despite admissions that it was lied to — the DTI may be able to discover the truth.

So what is the truth about Morgan's £20,000 purchase of Viglen Technology shares the day before an article by the City Slickers which unleashed the scandal?

The article appeared in the *Mirror* on Tuesday 18 January. It revealed that Viglen — headed by *Mirror* columnist Sir Alan Sugar — had launched a dot com division. The shares doubled from 180p on the news.

It now appears that far from the disgraced share-dealing Slickers Anil Bhoyrul and James Hipwell obtaining this information "last night", as stated in the *Mirror* article, told to the *Mirror* inquiry and relied on by "Moron" in explaining why he had no knowledge of the article when buying the shares on Monday 17 January, they obtained it at a meeting with Viglen chief executive Bordan Tkachuck the previous Friday.

So throughout Monday there was a plan for the Viglen story to appear the next day. Viglen had been previously tipped as a share of the year by the *Mirror*. Bhoyrul and Hipwell were already shareholders so by tipping the shares they were breaching the press complaints commission (PCC) code. But such minor details never deterred the two spivs who had regularly tipped shares they held thereby using *Mirror* readers to enrich themselves.

It also now appears that during the Monday there may have been discussions and/or e-mail messages between the Slickers and "Moron" regarding Viglen. If so, this is hardly surprising as the editor is said to have been a regular visitor to their office and to have paid close interest to the shares they were tipping. *Mirror* insiders say that on his way back to his office "Moron" would let it be known what was the

> Under Open Government this information must not be made available to anyone outside the Revenue.
>
> *Internal memo, Inland Revenue*

Slickers' latest hot stock. As a result other *Mirror* journalists were soon on to their brokers.

In his explanation of the Viglen purchase Morgan made no mention of any discussions that day with the Slickers, only with a family member. Indeed he claimed not to have known about the Viglen article until, first about 6.30pm later corrected to 11.30pm, when he saw the *Mirror* first edition.

That timing is crucial because Morgan also claims that he had already bought the shares "six hours before the City Slickers obtained their story from Viglen's chief executive". But that can no longer be true if the story was obtained on the Friday and Morgan bought on the Monday!

Morgan's statement means he bought sometime between noon and when the stock market closed on the Monday, most probably between 3pm and 4pm. To help "Moron" out — and also in a doomed bid to save themselves — the Slickers claimed initially that they had not confirmed the Viglen story until after the market closed.

But it now seems that the Viglen story was written by mid-afternoon Monday, possibly by 3.30pm, which would need Morgan to have bought early on Monday morning by the "six hours" claim. So when did he buy? As always, timing is everything. An early morning call to his now ex-stockbroker Antony Laiker and "Moron" may be free of any taint of using information obtained from the Slickers. Any call after he and they were in the office and he could have far more explaining to do.

But is this insider-dealing or market

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manipulation? A question the DTI will have to answer if there are to be any criminal proceedings. The accepted legal theory is that inside information has to come from the company concerned and it can come indirectly. However, it is not necessarily an insider-dealing offence to use information about to be published in a newspaper to buy shares ahead of publication.

But were the Slickers made "insiders" by Viglen's chief executive when told about the launch of its internet division — a fact confirmed by Sugar soon after the *Mirror* story appeared? If so they would have been barred from dealing. If so, then they would have been required to tell anyone else, such as their pal Piers, that this was "inside information" and not to be used to deal. But did they? If Viglen did not say the information was "price sensitive" — as it surely proved — then they and Morgan could be home free. And Viglen may not have felt this was necessary as it had semi-admitted the dot com move by advertising for staff to run the division.

However, given the nature and attitudes of both "Moron" and his Slickers, it is doubtful if the niceties of the insider-dealing law concerned them for more than a nanosecond — assuming they understood it — any more than the requirements of the PCC code and the abuse of *Mirror* readers' trust.

Market manipulation, however, could pose a more serious threat to the slippery trio. Ramping shares in which you and your friends inside and outside the newspaper already have an interest may be much easier to prove than insider-dealing. There would seem to have been numerous instances of the Slickers and other *Mirror* insiders benefiting from exaggerated "fill your boots"-style puffs. It may have been concerns of this nature which decided Kyte Securities to dispense with Laiker's services.

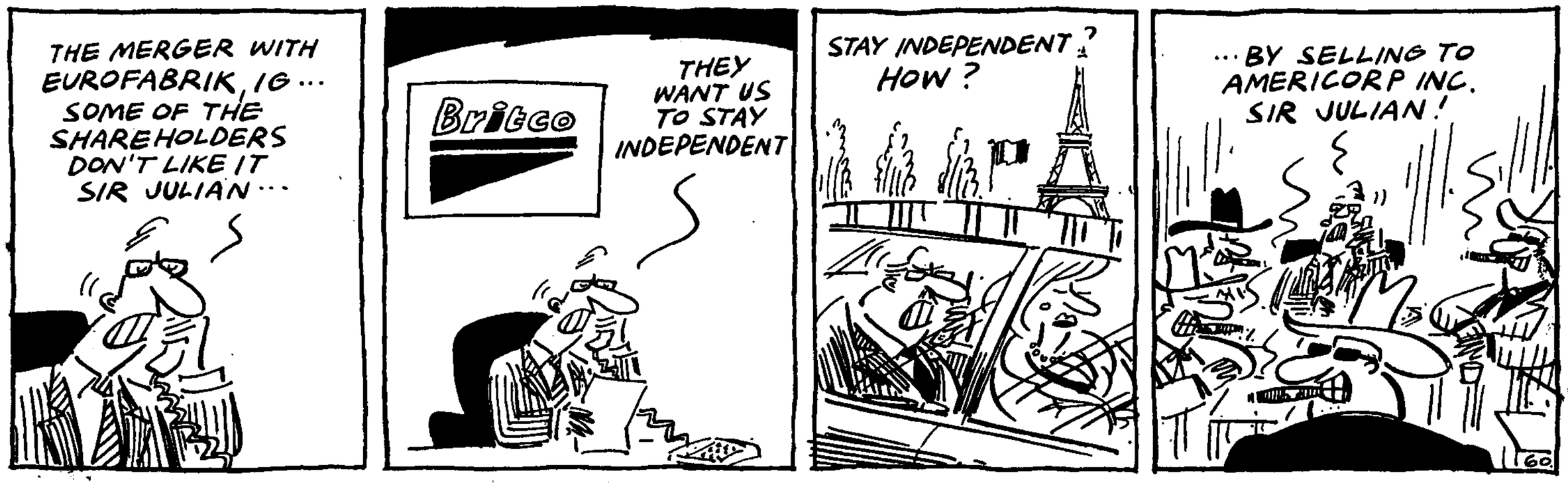
The question as ever with the DTI is whether it will have the bottle to hit the Slickers and the *Mirror* hard. History suggests not. What it may prefer is to find a way, perhaps via the Stock Exchange or the Financial Services Authority, to make its findings public and call for Trinity Mirror to act on them. In which case could this responsible public company refuse?

AFTER more than a year of uncertainty it seems a deal may be in the works for the sale of private investigators Network by its South African owners. Control Risks is said to be in talks to acquire what is left of what was once one of the top corporate gumshoes.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG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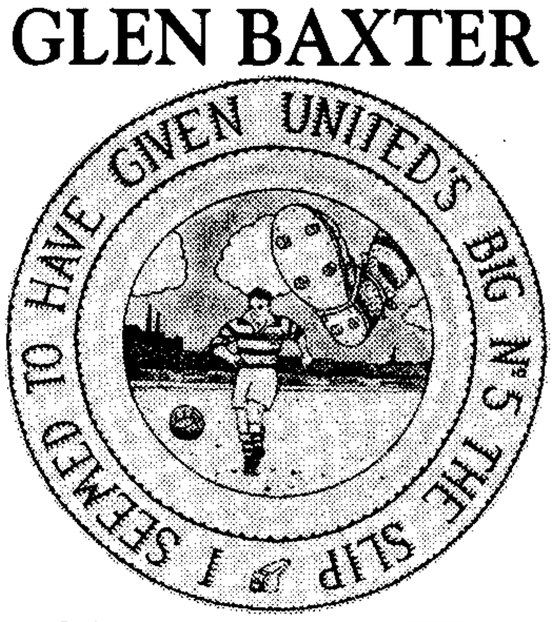

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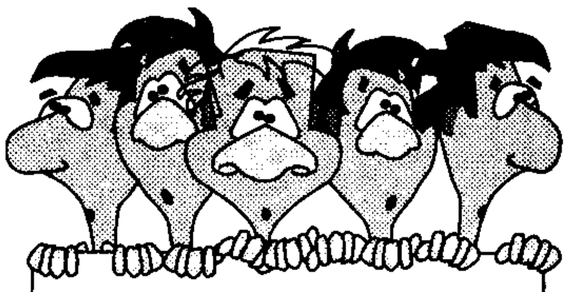

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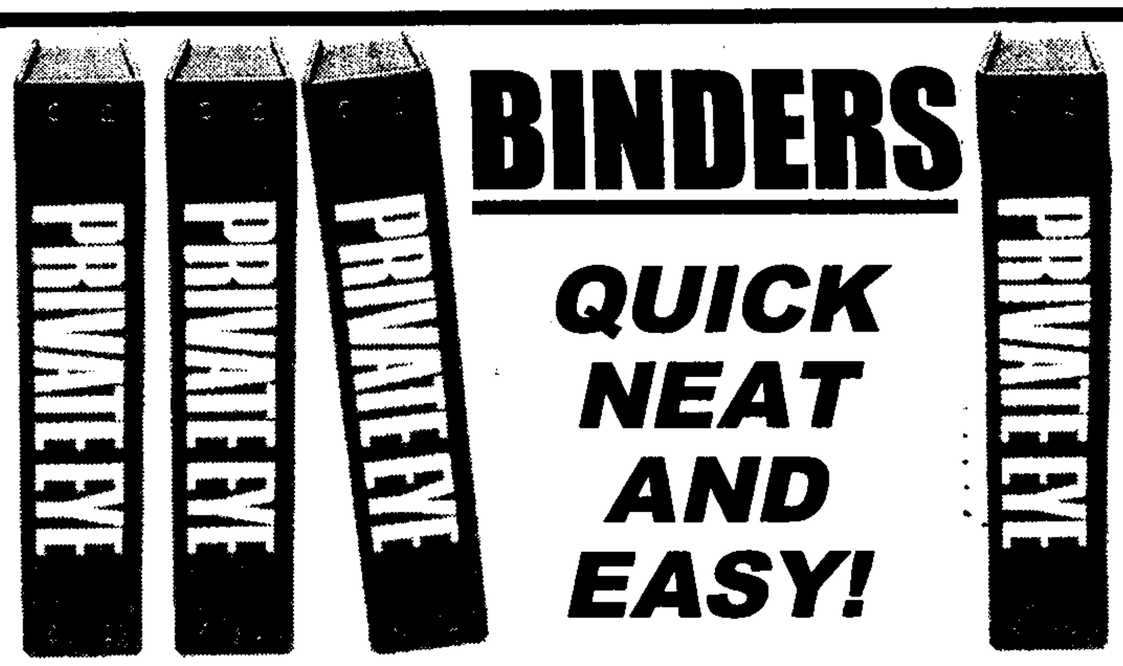

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CHAP 39, seeks balanced, fun lady near Exeter – or am I being just far too picky? Between the lines, any less requirement could reek of desperation, illiteracy or penny-pinching. Any more could infer inflexibility or reflect historical traumas. What would YOU suggest? Box 0897.

SCOTSMAN with business interests in Bournemouth and the West of Scotland into music, food, drink and sailing – seeks female companion for discreet fulfilling liaisons. Box 1197.

WARM, SENSITIVE, articulate male – active, young sixties, open marriage, GSOH – enjoys arts, walking, talking , good food/wine – seeks sensual woman friend/lover for worthwhile relationship. South London. Box 1097.

LOOSELY ATTACHED male, 51 – working away from home – WLTM a warm sensuous lady to share lonely evenings. Berks/Bucks area. E-mail CALLLAN_I@EXCITE.COM

MARRIED MAN, 48, fun-loving, slim and affluent, desires discreet female for friendship and adult fun – aged 30-55. Midlands and South East. Photo please. Box 0596.

PROFESSIONAL MALE – assertive, fit, presentable, solvent, 50s, seeks an unassertive but wayward lady living within 30 miles radius of Marble Arch. Absolute discretion assured – so be adventurous. Box 0395.

EXTRA MARITAL SEX sought by attractive, charming man, 48. I enjoy making your earth move. You enjoy dressing to kill. London S.E. Box 1897.

ASSERTIVE HANDSOME man/40 seeking svelte, younger, erotically unassertive girlfriend – 07050 398943.

ATTRACTIVE, TRUSTWORTHY,
romantic and intelligent lady,
early forties,
would like to rejoice with a reliable,
considerate, witty, passionate and
faithful friend/lover
in a thriving and
lasting relationship.
Enthusiasm about classical music
and dancing required.
LONDON REPLIES ONLY.
Box 2496.

CIVILISED MAN, 57, in celibate marriage, WLTM for lunch, stylish, petite woman who enjoys wearing stockings and suspenders. London and Southeast. Box 2095.

WRITER/ARTIST F 35 seeks unordinary M for love, sex and travel. Box 1597.

BALD, MARRIED man seeks quality married lady for discreet friendship and adultery. Box 2097.

SNAKES AND LADDERS, and I've thrown the dice (again!). Are you my lucky number? Me? Male, professional, young 45 (so I'm told!), 5'6", divorced, childless and baggage free (Sussex / Surrey). Box 1797.

EROTIC E-MAIL. Correspond with male, 45, overseas. Meet later? Box 1297.

REGULAR CHAP, 39, attached, lives southeast seeks female lover/friend. Photo please. Box 0297.

MARRIED MALE approaching 40, seeks female company for occasional weekend dalliance. Box 0597.

SCOTS GUY, 45, fit, seeking honest attractive unattached female (30-45) with GSOH. London/Berks area. Nissen40@AOL.com – Box 0197.

HOMESTEADER/WRITER, fit'n 60, kind, honest, loyal – seeks attractive better half, 40's – share Sussex idyll. Photo please. Box 1997.

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